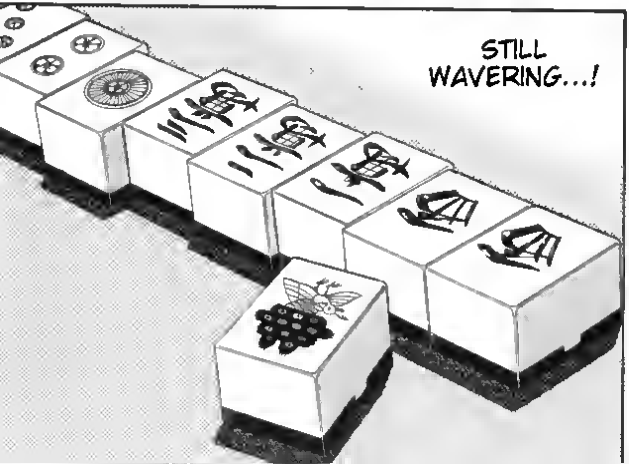
THE FINAL CONCLUSION WAS UNCERTAIN ...!



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CHAPTER 102
HEAVY LUCK
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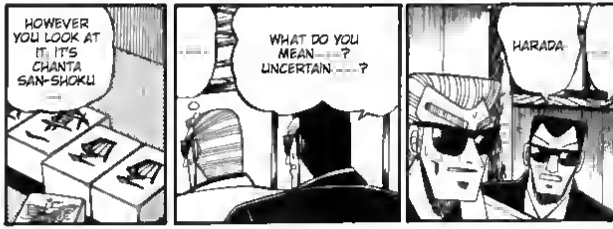
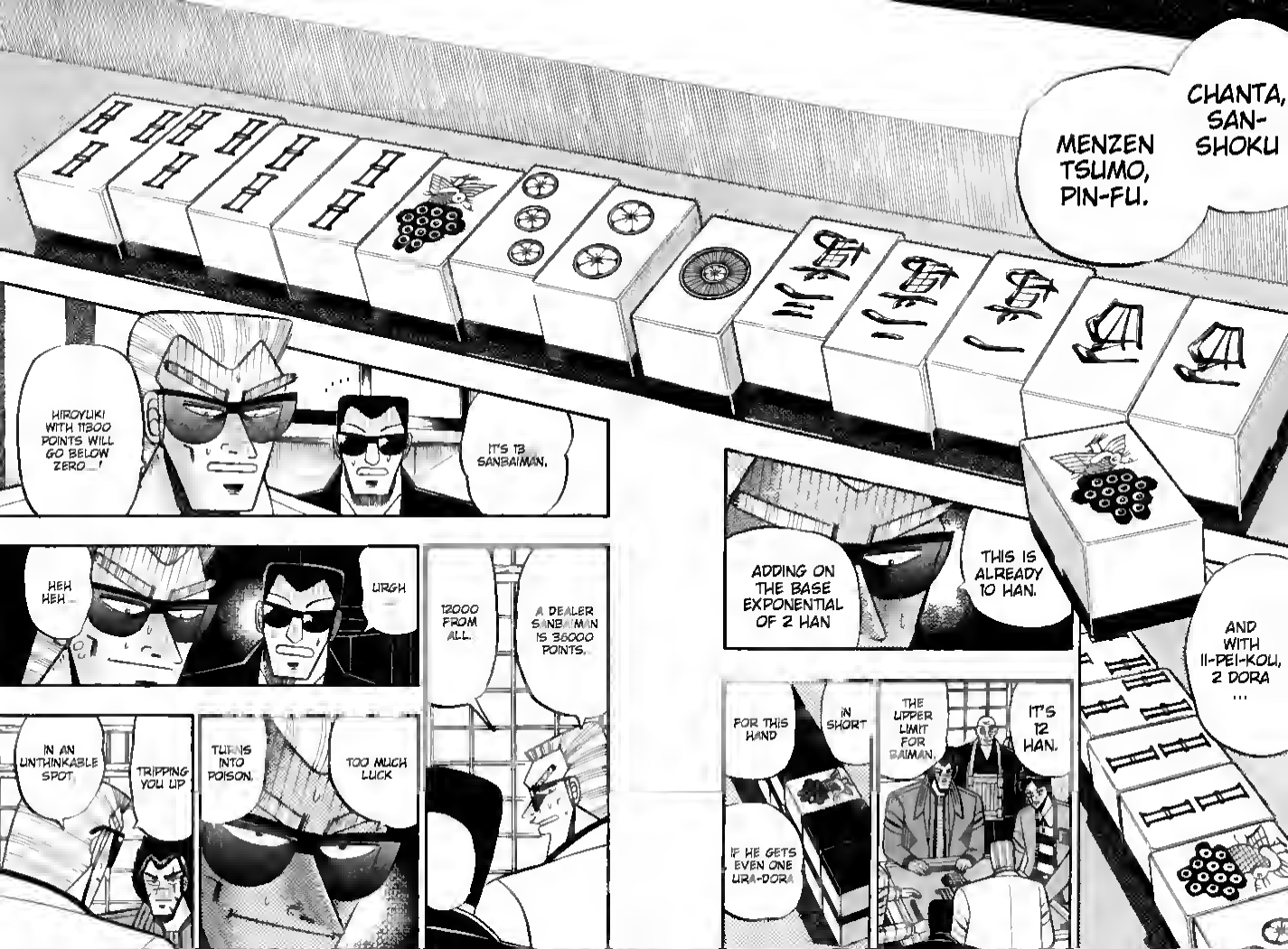
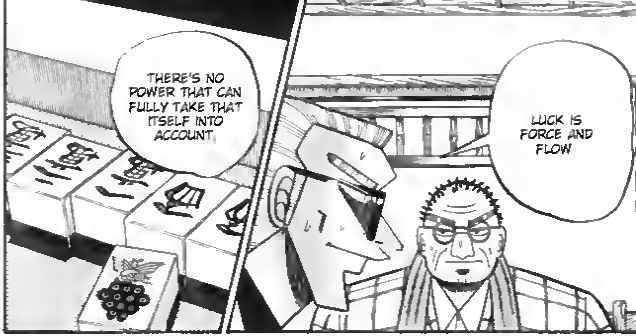
AND WITH II-PEI-KOU ADDED ON
HE'S USING TWO OF THE 2-SOU
IT'S THE MATTER OF HOW MUCH TEN'S HAND IS WORTH—
HUH—?
THAT HAND OF TEN'S
IN OTHER WORDS, AT THIS POINT IN TIME
AND AS A BONUS, TEN WAS THE DEALER

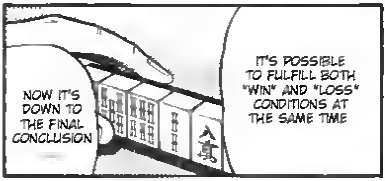

HOWEVER YOU LOOK AT IT, IT'S CHANTA SAN-SHOKU
WHAT DO YOU MEAN——? UNCERTAIN——?
HARADA

THAT'S NOT WHAT I'M QUESTIONING
I KNOW THAT——!
ARE YOU SOME KIND OF MORON?
THERE'S NO QUESTION THAT THEY COMPLETED CLEAR MAHJONG

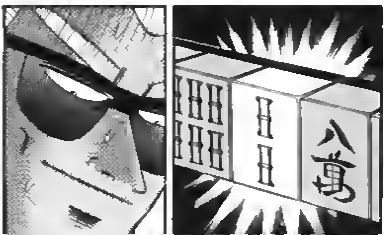

CHANTA, SAN-SHOKU
MENZEN TSUMO, PIN-FU.
AND WITH II-PEI-KOU, 2 DORA ...
IT'S 12 HAN.
THE UPPER LIMIT FOR BAIMAN.
IN SHORT
FOR THIS HAND
IF HE GETS EVEN ONE URA-DORA
THIS IS ALREADY 10 HAN.
ADDING ON THE BASE EXPONENTIAL OF 2 HAN
IT'S 13 SANBAIMAN.
HIROYUKI WITH 11800 POINTS WILL GO BELOW ZERO—!
A DEALER SANBAIMAN IS 36000 POINTS.
12000 FROM ALL.
TOO MUCH LUCK
TURNS INTO POISON.
TRIPPING YOU UP
IN AN UNTHINKABLE SPOT.
URGH
HEH HEH...


THERE'S NO POWER THAT CAN FULLY TAKE THAT ITSELF INTO ACCOUNT.
LUCK IS FORCE AND FLOW

FATE IS STILL...
WAVERING


NOW IT'S DOWN TO THE FINAL CONCLUSION
IT'S POSSIBLE TO FULFILL BOTH "WIN" AND "LOSS" CONDITIONS AT THE SAME TIME

AT THE SAME TIME THAT EAST COMPLETED CLEAR MAHJONG
SOMEONE WENT BELOW ZERO.



HIROYUKI WILL GO BELOW ZERO
IF EAST GETS IT, IT'S SANBAIMAN
EVERY-THING
IS RESTING ON THIS URA-DORA
THE CONCLUSION OF THE GAME WILL BE SHROUDED IN DARKNESS AGAIN...

DON'T TOUCH IT...!

HARADA ...
DON'T EVEN THINK OF IT ...!

YES
KH...
PULL YOUR HAND BACK ...!
THE 2-SOU HE HADN'T GOTTEN RID OF
HARADA HAD IN HIS HAND
POSPONING THE CONCLUSION OF THE MATCH SINCE HIRO WOULD GO BELOW ZERO
SAN-BAI-MAN
GOING ASTRAY !
THERE WOULD BE TWO URA-DORA IN TEN'S HAND
IF HE SWITCHED IT WITH THE URA-DORA INDICATOR
AND SOGA TOO, NEITHER OF YOU MOVE
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO TOUCH THAT TILE
HARADA ...
.....
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO FOOL AROUND WITCHING TILES ON ME !
YOU'VE GOTTA BE KIDDING ME.....!

I'LL FLIP IT OVER ...!

ざわざわ
IN THIS LONG BATTLE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST
THIS URA-DORA INDICATOR IS
THERE WON'T BE ANY MIS-CONDUCT.
OF COURSE
THE TILE THAT OUR FATES REST ON
FLIPPED OVER WITHOUT ROOM FOR MISCONDUCT
IT'LL BE CLEAR TO EVERYONE'S EYES
IT'S A TILE THAT CAN'T BE SPOILED.
NOBODY'S GOING TO TARNISH THAT!

IN SHORT
IT'LL BE DONE WITH ONE FINGER .....!
I'LL FLIP IT OVER WITH ONE FINGER ...!

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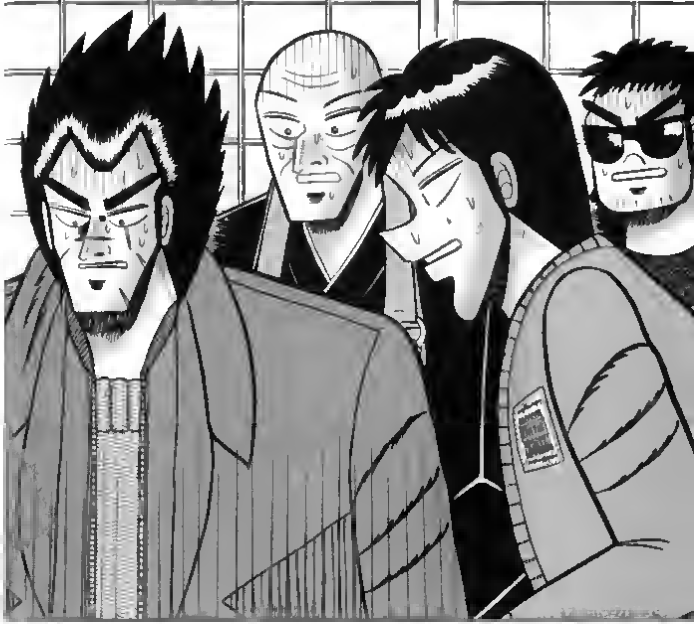
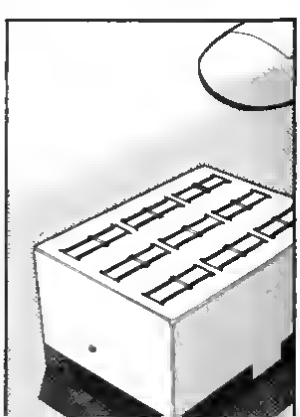
.....
BUT...
IF HE DOESN'T GET IT, EAST WINS...!
IF HE GETS EVEN ONE, THE MATCH HAS GONE ASTRAY AGAIN...!

LOST IN CHAOS ...!
URGH...!
COME ON, DON'T GET IT...!
DON'T GET IT...!
COME ON...!



WHICH MEANS...

IN SHORT

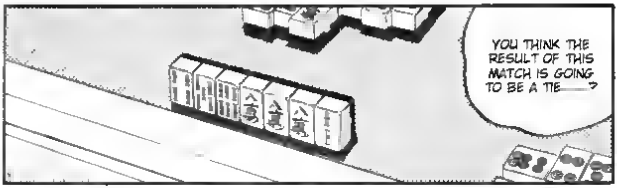

THE URA-DORA INDIC-ATOR IS 9-SOU!

URA-DORA IS 1-SOU...! HE GOT TWO URA-DORA...!
KH...!
THIS HAND IS SANBAIMAN ...!
WITH THIS
.....
ざわ..
ざわ..
BOTH "WIN" AND "LOSS" CONDITIONS WERE MET AT THE SAME TIME
HIROYUKI WENT BELOW ZERO AT THE SAME TIME THAT EAST COMPLETED CLEAR MAHJONG.
HARADA .....
WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN NOW...?
IN THIS MATCH .....
IS IT A TIE-!?
HUH—?

DO YOU REALIZE HOW MUCH TIME AND EFFORT HAVE BEEN SPENT HERE——?
IF YOU THINK ABOUT HOW FAR WE'VE COME SINCE THE QUALIFYING ROUNDS

ARE YOU AN IDIOT——?

A TIE——?
YES——

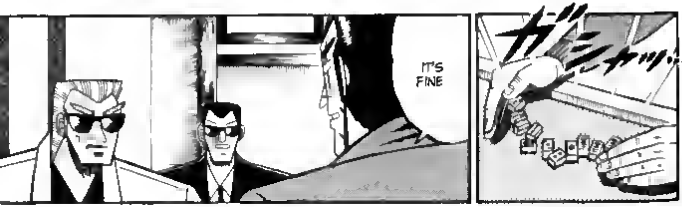

YOU THINK THE RESULT OF THIS MATCH IS GOING TO BE A TIE——?

BUT——

WE'RE NOT JOKING AROUND HERE
WE KEEP GOING UNTIL IT'S OVER——!

THIS HAS BEEN GOING ON LONG ENOUGH ALREADY
WITH A SHORT BATTLE

DO YOU MIND...?
ONE HOUR
LET'S PUT A TIME LIMIT ON IT FOR THE FIRST TIME.

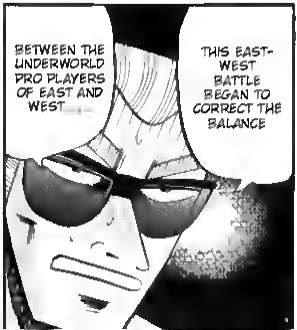

IT'S FINE
ガシャッ...

TEN...
?
NO...
YOU PICK, EAST-ONLY OR AN EAST-SOUTH BATTLE.
AND
WITH THE CURRENT PLAYERS.

LET'S SETTLE IT BETWEEN JUST THE TWO OF US ....!

ざわ…

HUH....?


BETWEEN THE UNDERWORLD PRO PLAYERS OF EAST AND WEST....
THIS EAST-WEST BATTLE BEGAN TO CORRECT THE BALANCE

ORIGINALLY
ざわ…
ざわ…

I WANT TO BEAT YOU...!
MOST IMPOR-TANTLY
NOW I DON'T EVEN CARE ABOUT THAT.
BUT
WE'LL SETTLE IT BETWEEN THE TWO OF US.
SO WE WON'T GET ANYONE ELSE INVOLVED ANYMORE.

TWO-PLAYER MAHJONG ...!
TWO-PLAYER MAHJONG ...?
ざわ!
ざわ
ざわ..
WHAT'S HE BEING GOING ON ABOUT ...?
THAT'S CRAZY ...

CHAPTER 103
TWO-PLAYER MAHJONG

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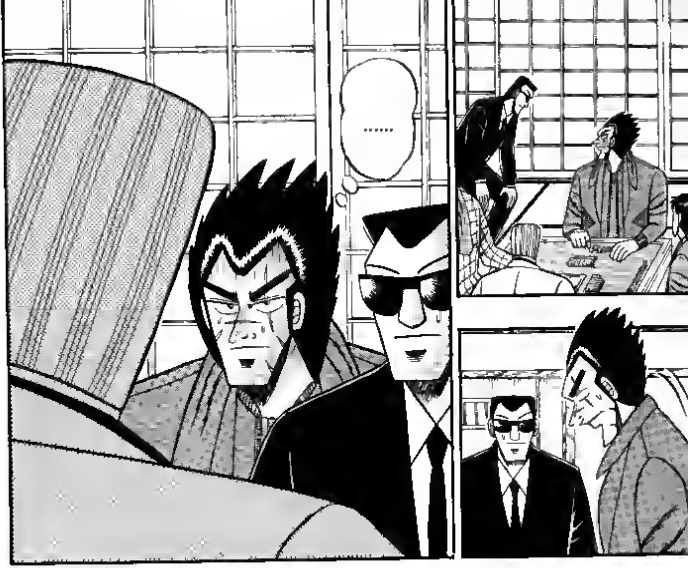
IT'S SIMPLE...
LET ME EXPLAIN.
HEY, YOU...!
HEH HEH ...
....
BETWEEN THE TWO OF US, UNRAVELLING THE TANGLED THREADS OF FATE BY FORCE
A FINAL BATTLE.
A GAME BETWEEN JUST YOU AND ME.
AS IT SOUNDS
HEH HEH ..
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY TWO-PLAYER MAHJONG...?
ENDING THIS LONG BATTLE WITHIN AN HOUR.
TO ITS LAST STOP.
BRINGING THIS DRAWN-OUT EAST-WEST BATTLE

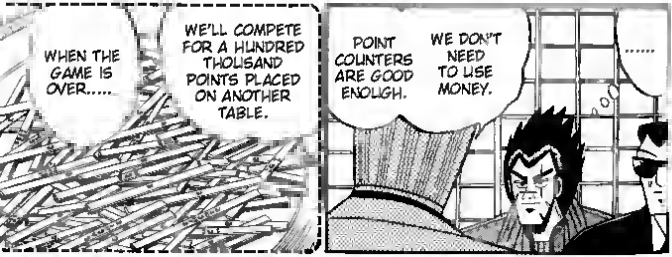

.....

BUT IT WAS UNEXPECT-EDLY AMUSING.
AT FIRST, THERE WAS JUST NO OTHER CHOICE BUT TO PLAY WITH TWO PEOPLE

AND THERE WERE ALL-DAY DEATHMATCHES TOO.
I PLAYED IT AGAIN AT OTHER TIMES WITH THE BOSS

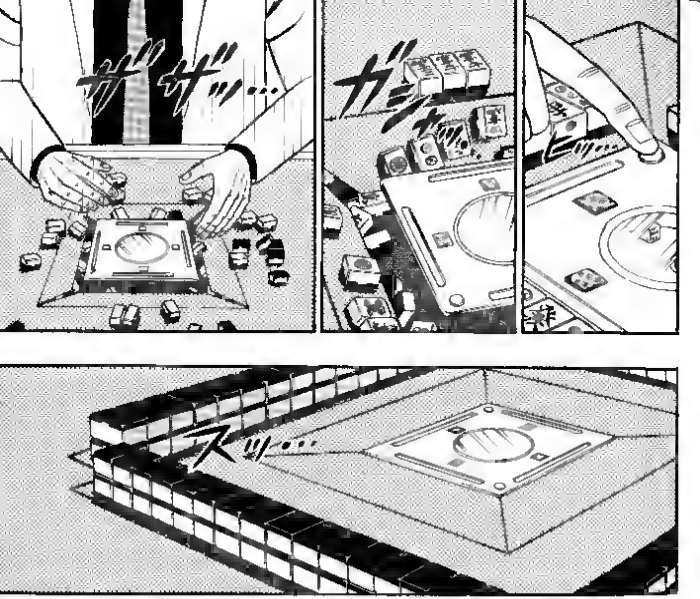
IS SOMETHING I PLAYED A LONG TIME AGO WITH A BOSS IN KYUSHU.
THIS TWO-PLAYER GAME
WHEN TWO OF THE PEOPLE AT THE TABLE SUDDENLY HAD TO LEAVE

FOR THAT, EACH OF US PUT
A HUNDRED MILLION YEN ON THE TABLE BESIDE US.
THAT WAS WHAT WE COMPETED FOR.....!


.....
WE DON'T NEED TO USE MONEY.
POINT COUNTERS ARE GOOD ENOUGH.
WE'LL COMPETE FOR A HUNDRED THOUSAND POINTS PLACED ON ANOTHER TABLE.
WHEN THE GAME IS OVER.....

THE PERSON WHO HAS THE MOST POINTS COLLECTED WINS
SETTLING THIS EAST-WEST BATTLE...!
.....
HEH HEH...

NEEDLESS TO SAY, THIS TWO-PLAYER GAME IS FAIR.
WELL... SO YOU'RE THAT SUSPICIOUS, HUH.
DON'T LOOK SO DAMN WORRIED.
THERE'S NO ADVANTAGE TO EITHER PERSON.
IT'S UNUSUAL FOR A PROPOSAL TO COME FROM ME WITHOUT MY OWN INTERESTS PLACED FIRST.
I JUST THOUGHT THAT I WOULD LIKE TO SETTLE THIS EAST-WEST BATTLE BETWEEN JUST THE TWO OF US.
SO I DON'T PLAN TO FORCE THIS TWO-PLAYER GAME ON YOU.
IF YOU'D RATHER NOT, WE'LL LEAVE IT.
I'M LISTENING ...
I UNDER-STAND .....
.....
WITH NOBODY ELSE INVOLVED...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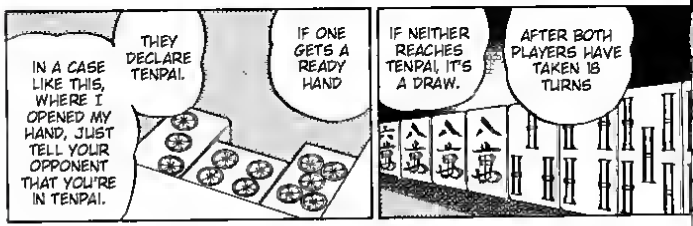
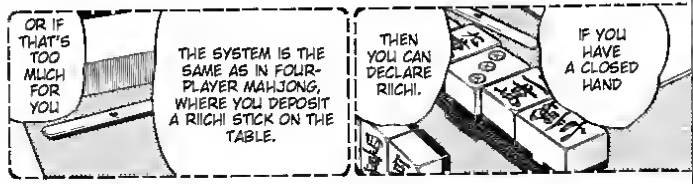
THEN...
I'LL EXPLAIN IT STEP BY STEP.
.....
TWO-PLAYER MAHJONG IS FUNDAMENTALLY A TWO-STAGE GAME.
THE FIRST HALF IS STAGE "A" AND THE SECOND HALF IS STAGE "B"
.....
I WANT YOU TO MAKE A CLEAR DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE TWO FROM THE START.

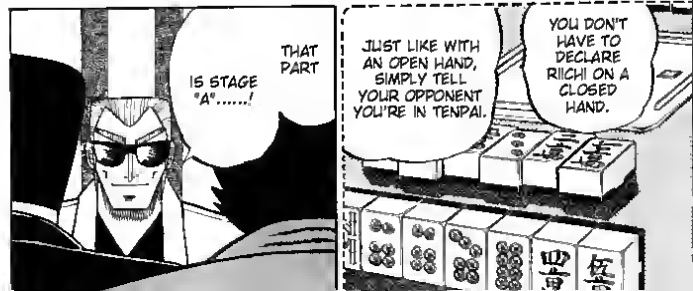
.....
IT'S SIMPLE.
BUT HAVING SAID THAT... IT'S NOT COMPLICATED.
THERE'S NOTHING SPECIAL TO SAY ABOUT IT.
FIRST OF ALL, STAGE "A".
AND FROM WHERE THEY INDICATE
THE DICE ARE ROLLED
BUT JUST WITH TWO PEOPLE PLAYING, INSTEAD .....
IN BRIEF, THE GAME IS PLAYED AS IT IS WITH FOUR PEOPLE
AND PLAYING UNTIL 18 TURNS HAVE GONE BY.
TAKING TURNS
ARE DEALT OUT .....
STARTING HANDS

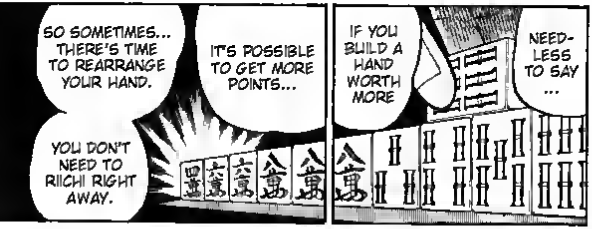
DRAW, DISCARD, AND REPEAT.
NO CHANGE.
CHII.
ONE SMALL POINT OF DIFFERENCE IS
THE DIFFERENCE IS
SO AS A MATTER OF CONVENIENCE, YOU CAN CHII FROM THE PLAYER ACROSS FROM YOU.
IN TWO-PLAYER MAHJONG THERE ISN'T A KAMICHA OR SHIMOCHA.
JUST THIS.
CHII.

EASY, SEE...
HEH HEH ...
....

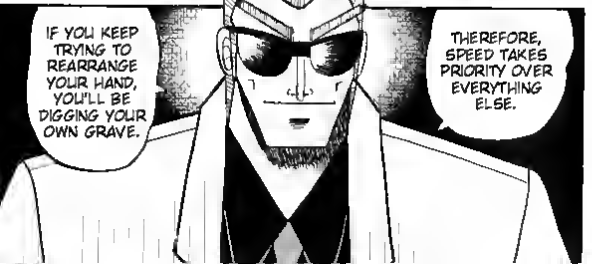

IN A CASE LIKE THIS, WHERE I OPENED MY HAND, JUST TELL YOUR OPPONENT THAT YOU'RE IN TENPAI.
THEY DECLARE TENPAI.
IF ONE GETS A READY HAND
IF NEITHER REACHES TENPAI, IT'S A DRAW.
AFTER BOTH PLAYERS HAVE TAKEN 18 TURNS


OR IF THAT'S TOO MUCH FOR YOU
THE SYSTEM IS THE SAME AS IN FOUR-PLAYER MAHJONG, WHERE YOU DEPOSIT A RIICHI STICK ON THE TABLE.
THEN YOU CAN DECLARE RIICHI.
IF YOU HAVE A CLOSED HAND

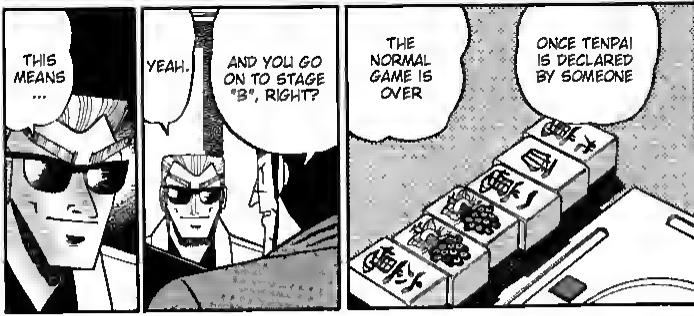

IS STAGE "A".....!
THAT PART
JUST LIKE WITH AN OPEN HAND, SIMPLY TELL YOUR OPPONENT YOU'RE IN TENPAI.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO DECLARE RIICHI ON A CLOSED HAND.


NEED-LESS TO SAY ...
IF YOU BUILD A HAND WORTH MORE
IT'S POSSIBLE TO GET MORE POINTS...
SO SOMETIMES... THERE'S TIME TO REARRANGE YOUR HAND.
YOU DON'T NEED TO RIICHI RIGHT AWAY.

IN SHORT ... A RACE TO TENPAI ...!


THEREFORE, SPEED TAKES PRIORITY OVER EVERYTHING ELSE.
IF YOU KEEP TRYING TO REARRANGE YOUR HAND, YOU'LL BE DIGGING YOUR OWN GRAVE.

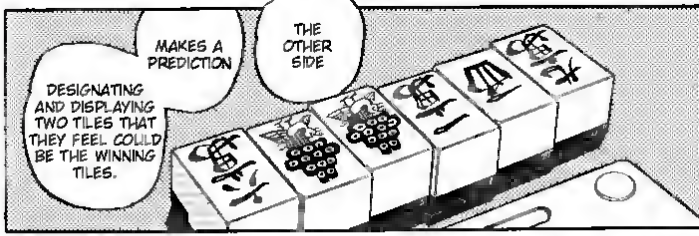
I SEE
.....
ざわ..ざわ..
.....

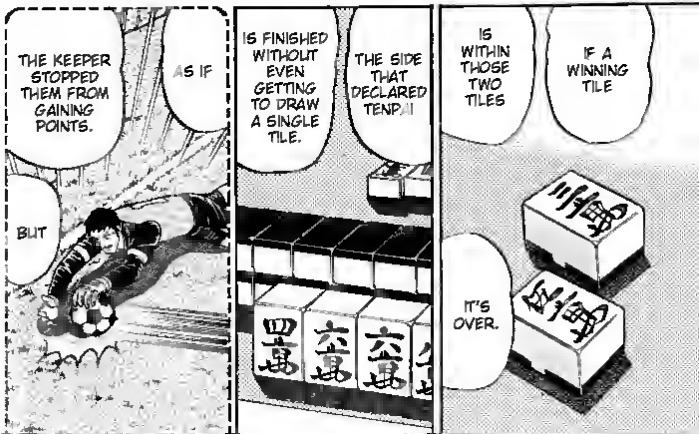

THIS MEANS ...
YEAH.
AND YOU GO ON TO STAGE "B", RIGHT?
THE NORMAL GAME IS OVER
ONCE TENPAI IS DECLARED BY SOMEONE

IN SHORT
THE GAME DIVIDES NEATLY INTO ATTACK AND DEFENSE.
GETTING THE CHANCE TO WIN...
THERE ARE NO FOLLOW-UP RICHI OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT.
FROM HERE ON
DRAW AND DISCARD STOPS.
IN SHORT

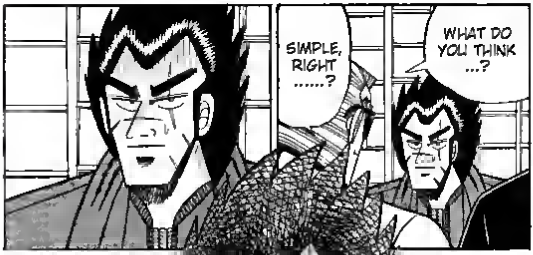
IS NOW BETWEEN THE ONE BETTING THAT THEY CAN "WIN" AND THE ONE TRYING TO PREVENT THAT "WIN"...!
ONE GETS POINTS BY KICKING THE BALL
MUCH LIKE A PENALTY KICK IN SOCCER.
ONE SIDE IS ON ATTACK
AND THE OTHER ON DEFENSE.
AND THE KEEPER CAN ONLY TRY TO STOP IT.

STAGE "B" OF TWO-PLAYER MAHJONG
IS LIKE THAT.
ONCE ONE SIDE DECLARES RIICHI
OR TENPAI


THE OTHER SIDE
MAKES A PREDICTION
DESIGNATING AND DISPLAYING TWO TILES THAT THEY FEEL COULD BE THE WINNING TILES.

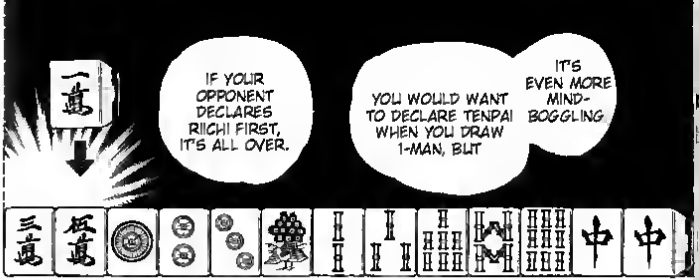

IF A WINNING TILE
IS WITHIN THOSE TWO TILES
IT'S OVER.
THE SIDE THAT DECLARED TENPAI
IS FINISHED WITHOUT EVEN GETTING TO DRAW A SINGLE TILE.
AS IF
THE KEEPER STOPPED THEM FROM GAINING POINTS.
BUT

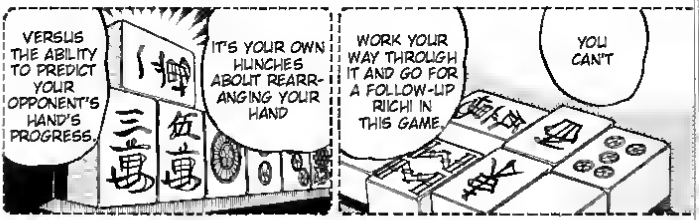
GAINS THE "RIGHT" TO DRAW FIVE TIMES.
THE SIDE THAT DECLARED TENPAI
AMONG THE DESIGNATED TILES...
IF A WINNING TILE ISN'T THERE
IF THEIR WINNING TILE IS AMONG THOSE, THEY WIN
AND SHOW THEIR HAND.
DRAW FIVE TIMES...
LIKE THIS ...
CONTINUING UNTIL, AS IN NORMAL FOUR-PLAYER MAHJONG, ONLY THE DEAD WALL IS LEFT.
THAT IS STAGE "B" .....
IF THEY CAN FIGURE OUT THE WINNING TILE IT'S OVER, BUT IF NOT, ONCE AGAIN THE OTHER SIDE DRAWS FIVE TIMES.
THIS REPEATS AGAIN.
IT GOES BACK TO THE START AGAIN
IF NOT... ONCE THEY'VE FINISHED DRAWING
AND THE SIDE THAT IS FACING RIICHI SETS OUT TWO TILES ONCE AGAIN.

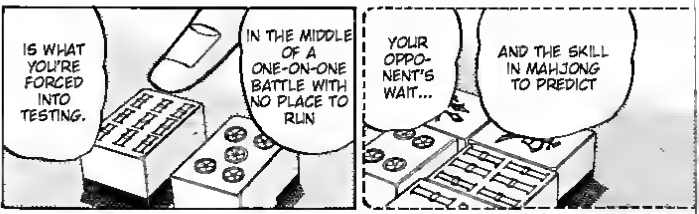


YOU COULD CALL IT... A "TENPAI PREDI-CTION" BATTLE ...!

ざわ…
ざわ…
……
PUTTING TOGETHER A NUMBER OF IDEAS AND EXPECTATIONS
YOU CAN EASILY IMAGINE HOW IT WORKS.
THINKING ABOUT IT A LITTLE
INTERESTING…
……I SEE……
BUT THEN, IF YOU DISGUISE YOUR HAND TOO MUCH
YOUR HAND IS SLOW.
EASILY DETECTED.
A STRAIGHT-FORWARD HAND WOULD BE
EVEN THOUGH SPEED TAKES PRIORITY
FOR INSTANCE, TO ADD CHANTA SAN-SHOKU TO A HAND LIKE THIS…
AND REARR-ANGING YOUR HAND……

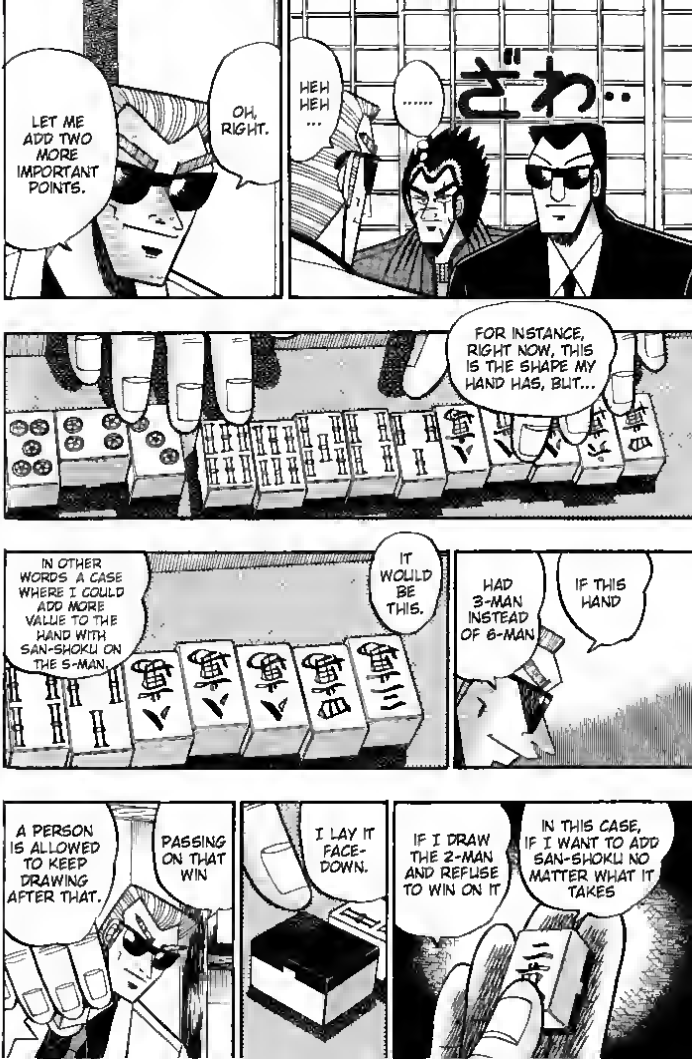

一萬
IF YOUR OPPONENT DECLARES RIICHI FIRST, IT'S ALL OVER.
YOU WOULD WANT TO DECLARE TENPAI WHEN YOU DRAW 1-MAN, BUT
IT'S EVEN MORE MIND-BOGGLING
三萬
伍萬
中
中


VERSUS THE ABILITY TO PREDICT YOUR OPPONENT'S HAND'S PROGRESS.
IT'S YOUR OWN HUNCHES ABOUT REARRANGING YOUR HAND
三萬
伍萬
WORK YOUR WAY THROUGH IT AND GO FOR A FOLLOW-UP RIICHI IN THIS GAME.
YOU CAN'T


IS WHAT YOU'RE FORCED INTO TESTING.
IN THE MIDDLE OF A ONE-ON-ONE BATTLE WITH NO PLACE TO RUN
YOUR OPPONENT'S WAIT...
AND THE SKILL IN MAHJONG TO PREDICT

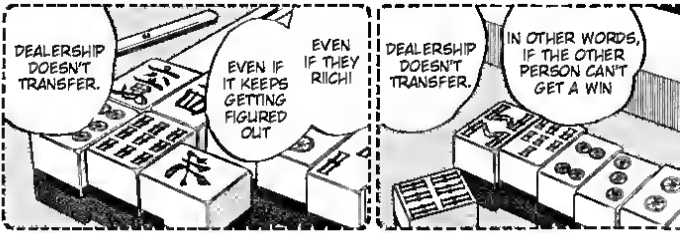
IF IT'S A LONG GAME, THERE'S NO DOUBT
IN THIS GAME.... WILL WIN.
THAT THE BEST WILL WIN ....!
THE MOST SKILLED PLAYER
UNLIKE FOUR-PLAYER MAHJONG, VERY CLEARLY

BUT
THE TIME LIMIT FOR THIS GAME IS ONE HOUR.
SO SKILL ALONE WON'T WIN IT.
ACTUAL ABILITY, PLUS... GOOD LUCK...
THE LUCK OF THE PLAYERS IN THIS MATCH .....
一萬
三萬
BETWEEN HARADA AND TEN
WHICH STAR IS BRIGHTER ...?
BOTH OF THEIR LUCK WILL BE TESTED AT THE SAME TIME.
THEIR STRENGTH...
THEIR "CALIBER" WILL BE JUDGED ...!


LET ME ADD TWO MORE IMPORTANT POINTS.
OH, RIGHT.
HEH HEH ...
.....
ざわ…
FOR INSTANCE, RIGHT NOW, THIS IS THE SHAPE MY HAND HAS, BUT...
IN OTHER WORDS A CASE WHERE I COULD ADD MORE VALUE TO THE HAND WITH SAN-SHOKU ON THE 5-MAN.
IT WOULD BE THIS.
IF THIS HAND
HAD 3-MAN INSTEAD OF 6-MAN
A PERSON IS ALLOWED TO KEEP DRAWING AFTER THAT.
PASSING ON THAT WIN
I LAY IT FACE-DOWN.
IF I DRAW THE 2-MAN AND REFUSE TO WIN ON IT
IN THIS CASE, IF I WANT TO ADD SAN-SHOKU NO MATTER WHAT IT TAKES

YOU CAN DO IT IN REGULAR MAHJONG, TOO.
THAT'S JUST NATURAL ...
AND...
WELL ...
THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO.....
WHEN THE END ROLLS AROUND
IF YOU DON'T TAKE IT ...
.....
THERE ISN'T A SITUATION LIKE IN FOUR-PLAYER MAHJONG WHERE THE DEALER PAYS MORE ON TSUMO.
BECAUSE POINTS ARE ONLY BEING HELD ON A DIFFERENT TABLE
IN SHORT
IN THIS TWO-PLAYER GAME
THERE'S ALSO THE MATTER OF THE DEALER...
NOT A SINGLE DOWN-SIDE.
IT'S JUST A GOOD SPOT TO BE IN .....
SIMPLY EARNS 1.5 TIMES THE AMOUNT OF THE NON-DEALER...
THE DEALER
DEALER
NON-DEALER
IN TWO-PLAYER MAHJONG, IT WOULD FLIP BACK AND FORTH TOO MUCH...
SO... THE WAY THE DEALER IS DETERMINED IS CRITICAL, BUT
IS PRICELESS. AND... POINTS ARE WHAT DETERMINE THE FATE OF THIS MATCH.
THE POSITION OF THE DEALER

CONTINUES TO HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE DEALER.
THE PERSON WHO WON LAST
IN THE PREVIOUS ROUND, OR THE ROUND BEFORE THAT
OR EVEN THE ROUND BEFORE THAT.....
SO IN TWO-PLAYER MAHJONG, THIS IS HOW IT WORKS.


DEALERSHIP DOESN'T TRANSFER.
EVEN IF IT KEEPS GETTING FIGURED OUT
EVEN IF THEY RIICH!
DEALERSHIP DOESN'T TRANSFER.
IN OTHER WORDS, IF THE OTHER PERSON CAN'T GET A WIN

WHAT DO YOU THINK ...?
.....
.....
THOSE ARE THE RULES, BUT...
AFTER THAT, THAT'S HOW THE DEALER IS DETERMINED
WELL... FOR THE FIRST DEALER
IT'S ONLY DETERMINED BY THE ROLL OF THE DICE, BUT...

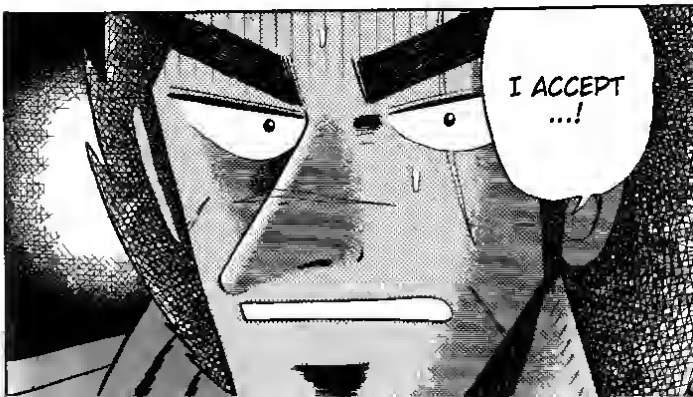
THIS TWO-PLAYER MAHJONG ...
ARE YOU WILLING TO GO ALONG WITH IT ...?

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ...?
TEN ...
TEN ...

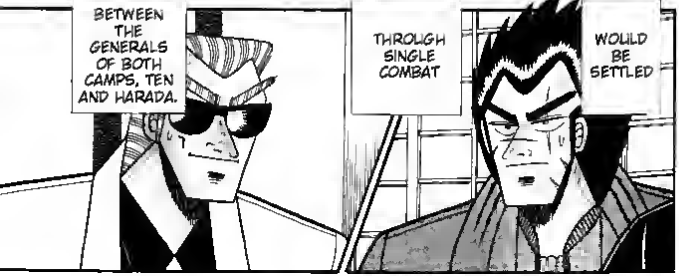
DO YOU MIND ...?
HIRO ...

I'M LEAVING IT UP TO YOU ...!

HARA-DA..
OKAY ...
.....


I ACCEPT ...!

THIS TANGLED EAST-WEST BATTLE
CHAPTER 104: THE BEST TIME


BETWEEN THE GENERALS OF BOTH CAMPS, TEN AND HARADA.
THROUGH SINGLE COMBAT
WOULD BE SETTLED

THERE WOULD BE NOTHING AFTER THIS, MAKING IT A FINAL BATTLE ……!
DRAW-ING OUT THE BATTLE.
A SORT OF PLAYOFF.
HARADA MADE THE OFFER, AND TEN ACCEPTED.

天
CHAPTER 104
THE FINEST MOMENT

WOULD THE VICTOR BE HARADA ...?
OR WOULD IT BE TEN...?

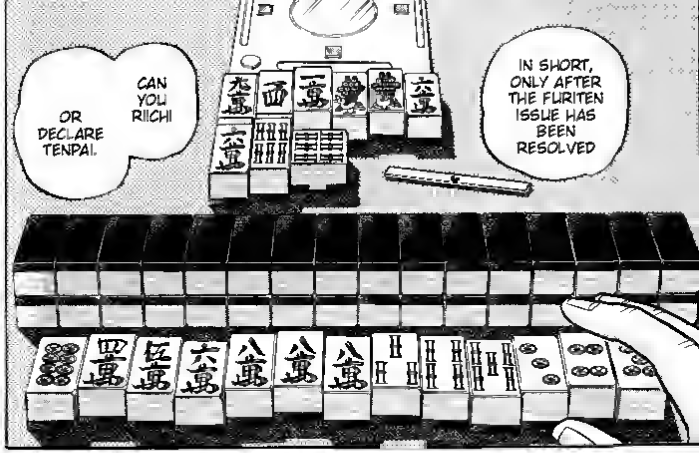
ざわ..
ざわ..
.....
IN ONE WAY OR ANO-THER
.....
THIS BATTLE WOULD BE DETERMINING WHO WOULD COME OUT ON TOP.

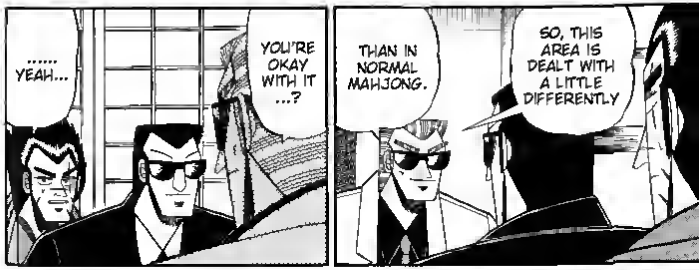
YOU'RE GOING TO ACCEPT ...
SO...
HEH HEH ...

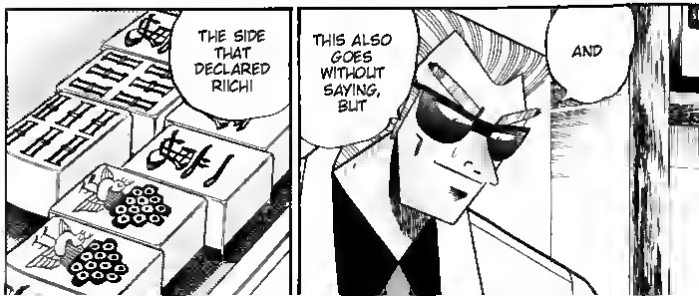
..... JUST SO YOU'RE AWARE .....
THERE'S NO REAL NEED TO EXPLAIN WHAT'S COMMON SENSE, BUT...
THEN LET ME EXPLAIN A FEW OF THE FINER POINTS AHEAD OF TIME.

A FIGHT TO PICK OUT THE WINNING TILES.
AND PAST THAT
THIS TWO-PLAYER MAHJONG IS PRIMARILY A RACE TO TENPAI.
AS I SAID BEFORE
IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT FURITEN RIICHI IS NOT ALLOWED.
IN A BATTLE OF THAT NATURE

IF WHILE YOU'RE WAITING TO CHANGE YOUR HAND TO THE HIGHER-VALUED SAN-SHOKU
FOR INSTANCE, WITH THIS HAND
OF COURSE YOU CAN'T WIN.
EVEN IF YOU DRAW YOUR WINNING TILE
BY CHANCE
RIICHI LIKE THIS WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE.
AND GO INTO A SINGLE WAIT
WITH A HAND LIKE THIS.
ALL YOU CAN DO IS THROW AWAY YOUR PAIR


IN SHORT, ONLY AFTER THE FURITEN ISSUE HAS BEEN RESOLVED
CAN YOU RIICHI OR DECLARE TENPAI.

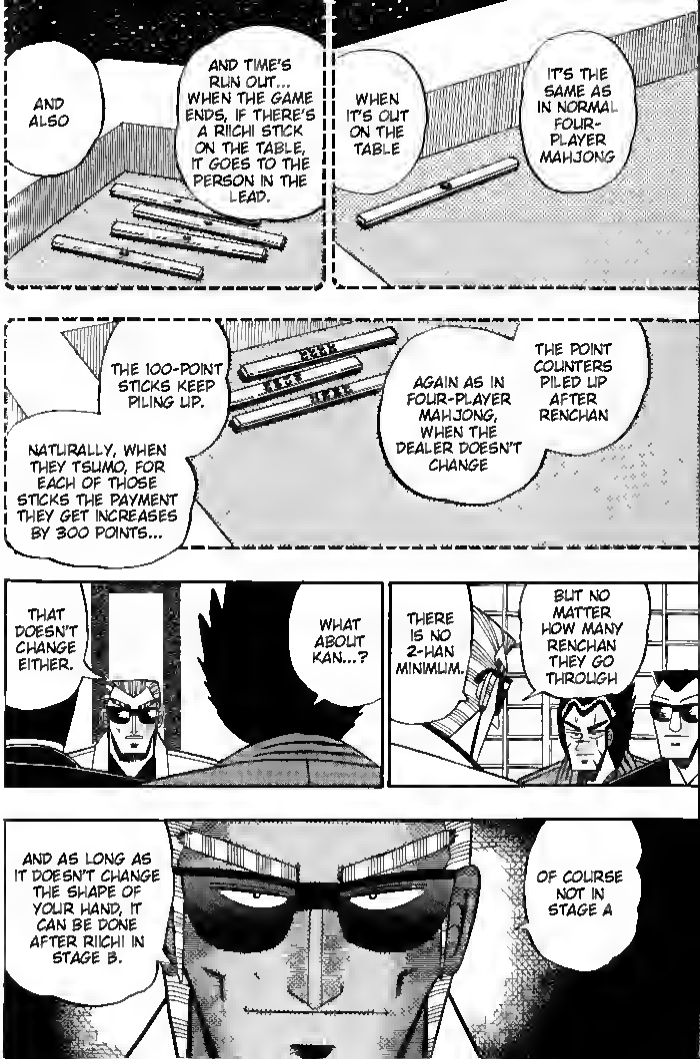

SO, THIS AREA IS DEALT WITH A LITTLE DIFFERENTLY
THAN IN NORMAL MAHJONG.
YOU'RE OKAY WITH IT ...?
..... YEAH...


AND
THIS ALSO GOES WITHOUT SAYING, BUT
THE SIDE THAT DECLARED RIICHI

AND EVEN IF THEY GET THAT FAR WITHOUT WINNING
WILL DRAW UNTIL THE END OF THE HAITEI TILES
WHILE MAKING THEIR DRAWS
IN EITHER CASE
OR THEIR OPPONENT FIGURES THEIR HAND OUT ALONG THE WAY
THAT THEY WERE ACTUALLY IN TENPAI
TO PROVE
THEY MUST OPEN THEIR HAND

WITHOUT CARING THAT YOU WERE IN NO-TEN
AND YOU FELT THAT YOUR OPPONENT WAS GOING TO BE QUICK TO RIICHI DURING THE TENPAI RACE
IF THAT RULE WASN'T THERE .....
ON ONE OF THE TILES THE OPPONENT DESIGNATES
THEN IN STAGE B
TO MAKE IT SO THAT YOUR OPPONENT COULDN'T DECLARE RIICHI.
YOU COULD RIICHI BEFORE THEY DID
IT'S NECESSARY TO REVEAL THE HAND OF THE ONE WHO DECLARED TENPAI.
THAT GOES WITHOUT SAYING.
ILLEGAL MOVES LIKE THAT CAN COME UP.
IT WOULDN'T WORK OUT WELL.
SO IF YOU DON'T OPEN YOUR HAND
AND BREAK UP YOUR HAND
SAY THAT THEY GOT IT

THEY HAVE NOTHING TO DECLARE RIICHI WITH
WHEN BOTH PEOPLE START WITH ZERO POINTS
THERE'S ONE LAST THING
TO BRING UP
SO AS A MATTER OF CONVENIENCE, TEN 1000-POINT COUNTERS EACH...
WHAT HAPPENS WITH THE ACCUMULATED RIICHI STICKS .....?
SO WHAT YOU SHOULD BE ASKING IS...
WHICH MAKES YOU WONDER ...
ARE GIVEN OUT TO BOTH PLAYERS AT THE START...
IF A LONG PERIOD OF TIME GOES PAST AND NOBODY WINS, THOSE RIICHI STICKS THAT PILE UP ARE
YOU SAID BEFORE THAT THEY WOULD BE HANDED OUT, BUT .....
THAT PART IS NO DIFFERENT.
THAT'S RIGHT.
YEAH .....
.....
.. ..
NOT RETURNED TO THE PERSON WHO PUT THEM OUT, AND TAKEN BY THE PERSON IN THE LEAD... IS WHAT I'D IMAGINE.....?

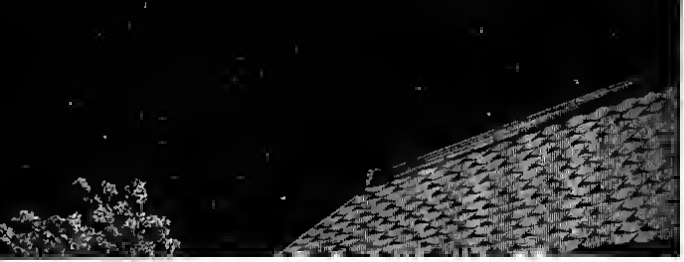

AND ALSO
AND TIME'S RUN OUT... WHEN THE GAME ENDS, IF THERE'S A RIICHI STICK ON THE TABLE, IT GOES TO THE PERSON IN THE LEAD.
WHEN IT'S OUT ON THE TABLE
IT'S THE SAME AS IN NORMAL FOUR-PLAYER MAHJONG
THE 100-POINT STICKS KEEP PILING UP.
NATURALLY, WHEN THEY TSUMO, FOR EACH OF THOSE STICKS THE PAYMENT THEY GET INCREASES BY 300 POINTS...
AGAIN AS IN FOUR-PLAYER MAHJONG, WHEN THE DEALER DOESN'T CHANGE
THE POINT COUNTERS PILED UP AFTER RENCHAN
THAT DOESN'T CHANGE EITHER.
WHAT ABOUT KAN...?
THERE IS NO 2-HAN MINIMUM.
BUT NO MATTER HOW MANY RENCHAN THEY GO THROUGH
AND AS LONG AS IT DOESN'T CHANGE THE SHAPE OF YOUR HAND, IT CAN BE DONE AFTER RIICHI IN STAGE B.
OF COURSE NOT IN STAGE A

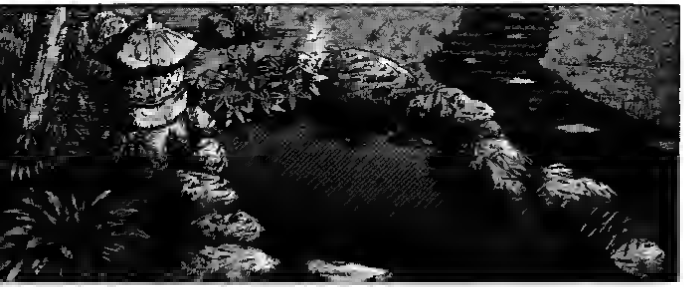
IN SHORT, YOU CAN'T KAN ON THIS HAND, BUT
FOR THIS HAND, IT'S OKAY.
ROUND WIND ...?
...
THE SAME AS USUAL.
IT CAN'T WORK THE SAME WAY.
THIS IS MAHJONG WITH ONLY TWO PLAYERS.
I NEED TO SAY A FEW WORDS ABOUT THAT.
OF COURSE
OH, RIGHT ...
HEH HEH...

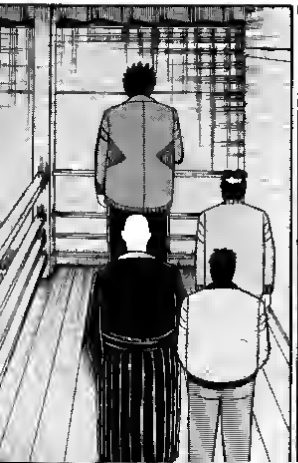
WHEN I PLAYED IT BEFORE
BECAUSE IT WOULD GO BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN EAST AND SOUTH ROUNDS TOO FAST
THE ENTIRE GAME WAS EAST ROUND.
IN SHORT
THE ONLY WINDS THAT CAN BE USED ARE THE DEALER'S DOUBLE-TON AND NON-DEALER'S TON AND SHA.
THAT'S HOW IT WORKED.
ARE YOU FINE WITH THAT ...?
.....
YEAH ...
ANYTHING ELSE...?
NO.....
.....
.....
NOTHING ...

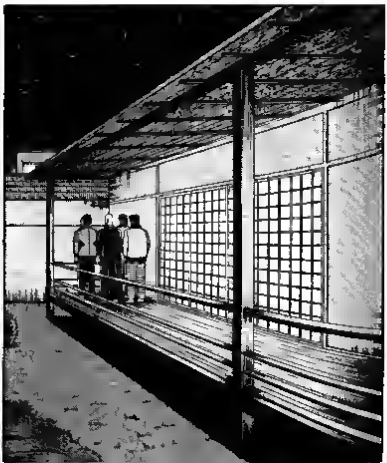
TIME TO GET READY ...
THEN...
ス・・・
WE'LL TAKE A SHORT BREAK.
TEN...
AND A CLOCK...
GET A SET OF TILES TO PICK THE POSSIBLE WINNING TILES FROM
IT'LL BE A FEW MINUTES UNTIL IT'S SET UP.
Y... YESSIR ...!

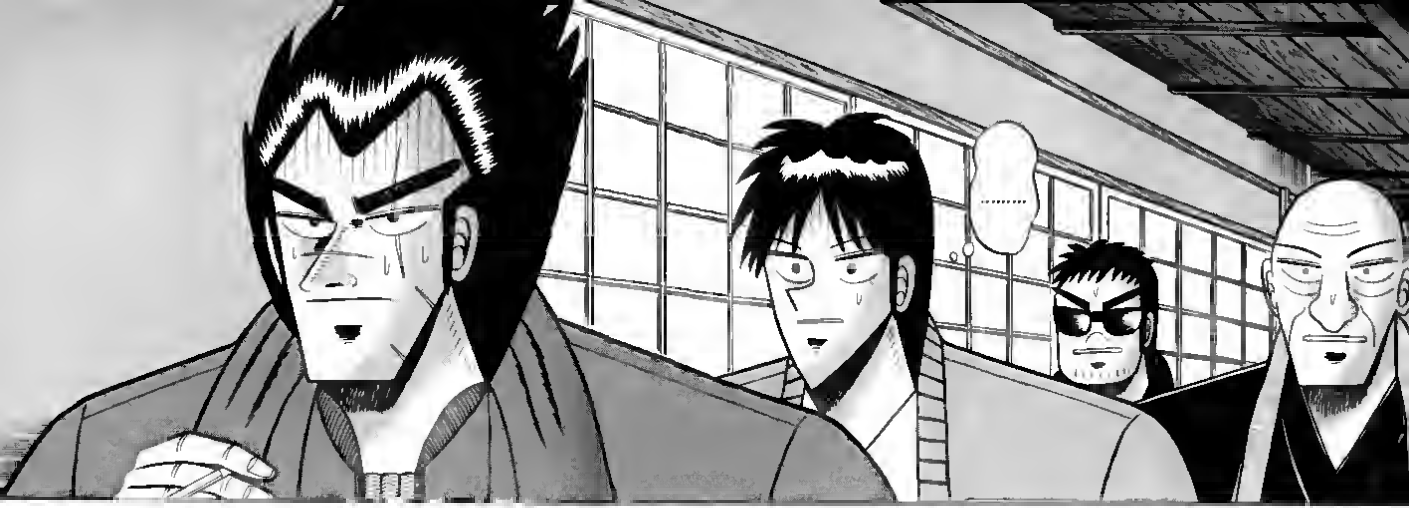
WE'LL RESUME IN 30 MINUTES...
IN THIS ROOM ...!
パタン
ガタ..
ス..
ガタ..
TEN...







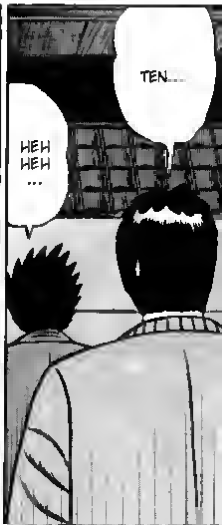



.....

IF HE WASN'T, THERE'S NO WAY HE WOULD HAVE PROPOSED THIS TWO-PLAYER MAHJONG GAME.
.....
FASCINATED BY MAHJONG.

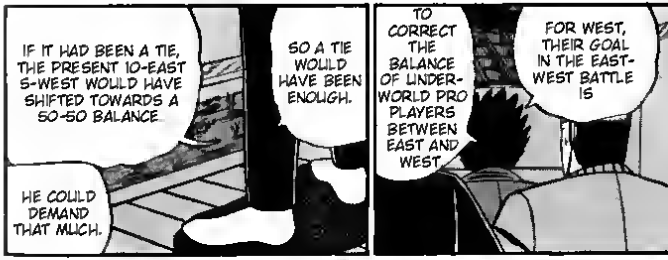
UH...
ON THAT POINT, THERE'S NO REAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HIM AND US MAHJONG MANIACS.
EVEN IF HE'S PLAYING THE ROLE OF THE VILLAIN
HE REALLY DOES ENJOY IT...

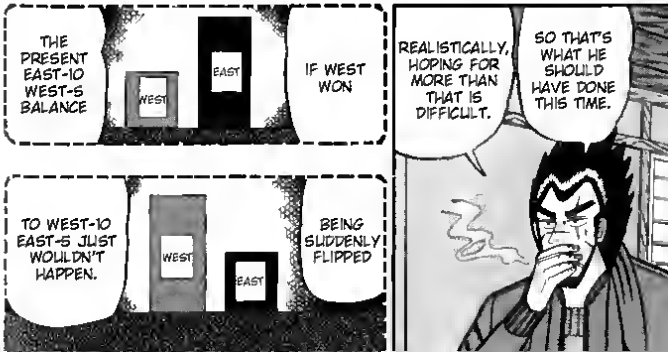
HE'S JUST LIKE US ..


TEN....
HEH HEH ...

HARADA'S JUST LIKE US.
HARADA ...
HUH ...?

WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN STRANGE.
CALLING IT A TIE IN THE GAME OF CLEAR MAHJONG
THIS IS BECAUSE
IT SHOULD HAVE ALREADY BEEN OVER.
DESPITE THAT .....
BUT


IF IT HAD BEEN A TIE, THE PRESENT 10-EAST 5-WEST WOULD HAVE SHIFTED TOWARDS A 50-50 BALANCE
SO A TIE WOULD HAVE BEEN ENOUGH.
HE COULD DEMAND THAT MUCH.
TO CORRECT THE BALANCE OF UNDER-WORLD PRO PLAYERS BETWEEN EAST AND WEST
FOR WEST, THEIR GOAL IN THE EAST-WEST BATTLE IS


THE PRESENT EAST-10 WEST-5 BALANCE
WEST
EAST
IF WEST WON
REALISTICALLY, HOPING FOR MORE THAN THAT IS DIFFICULT.
SO THAT'S WHAT HE SHOULD HAVE DONE THIS TIME.
TO WEST-10 EAST-5 JUST WOULDN'T HAPPEN.
WEST
EAST
BEING SUDDENLY FLIPPED

"FROM HERE ON, PLAYER A FROM EAST IS NOW PLAYER B FROM WEST"
FOR HARADA TO SUDDENLY BE ALLOTTED THAT MANY
EVEN IF YOU COULD SAY THAT, IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE.
EACH HAVE THEIR OWN SITUATIONS TO HANDLE.
THAT'S BECAUSE THE YAKUZA BOSSES THAT HAVE UNDERWORLD PRO PLAYERS
THE BEST THEY COULD GET WOULD BE EAST-7 WEST-8...
WEST
EAST
THAT'S THEIR LIMIT.
FROM THE PRESENT EAST-10 WEST-5
EVEN IF THE NUMBERS DID FLUCTUATE
TOWARD 50-50
WHY DIDN'T HE SETTLE FOR A TIE...?
SO THEN .....
FOR HARADA, ON THAT POINT... HE'S A MAN THAT UNDERSTANDS HOW THE WORLD WORKS.
THAT'S JUST COMMON SENSE.
BETWEEN A TIE OR A VICTORY FOR HIM...
THE REALITY IS, THERE'S NO REAL DIFFERENCE

AND BRING IT TO A CONCLUSION BY FORCE ..?
WHY DID HARADA HIMSELF CHOOSE TO KEEP GOING WITH THE BATTLE

HIRO... WHY DO YOU THINK...?
?

I THINK I UNDERSTAND, A LITTLE.....

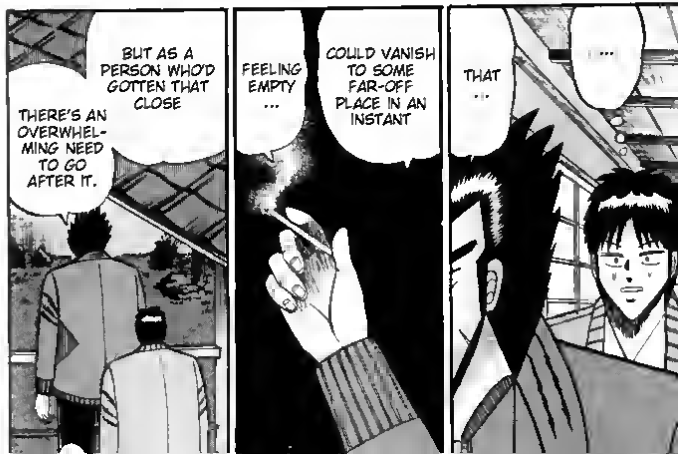
HEH HEH...

DO YOU KNOW...?
NO...

.....
MAYBE
HE'S CHASING AFTER A "MOMENT".
MOMENT ..?
YEAH .....
I FEEL SOMETHING SIMILAR, TOO.
AFTER HAVING BEEN DOING THIS FOR THE LAST FEW YEARS, I UNDERSTAND.

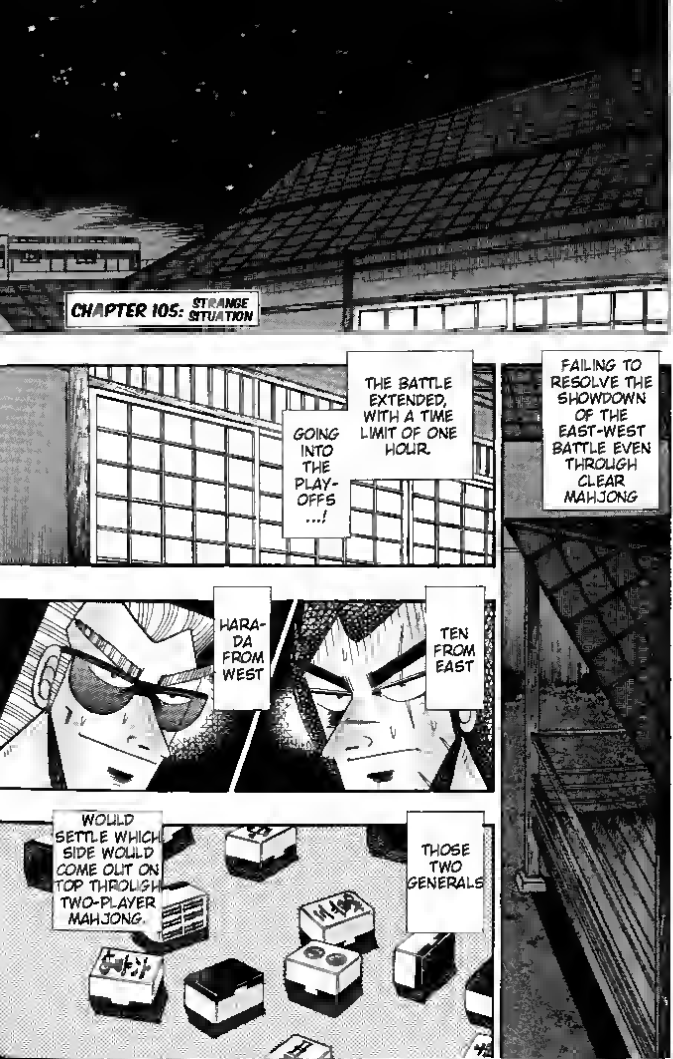
THAT I WANTED TO REACH THE TOP.
IN BRIEF, IT WAS
A FEELING RAN THROUGH ME.
...

I WANT TO HAVE A FINEST "MOMENT".
EVEN JUST ONCE IN MY LIFE WOULD BE ENOUGH.


THERE'S AN OVERWHELMING NEED TO GO AFTER IT.
BUT AS A PERSON WHO'D GOTTEN THAT CLOSE
FEELING EMPTY ...
COULD VANISH TO SOME FAR-OFF PLACE IN AN INSTANT
THAT ...
...

WE JUST HAVEN'T SEEN MUCH OF IT YET.
IT COULD BE THAT HARADA HAS THAT SICKNESS TOO...
IT'S BEEN LIKE I'M CHASING AFTER THAT BRIEF "MOMENT".
SINCE THEN
THE OTHER REASON A PERSON HAS FOR LIVING...
WHAT ELSE COULD IT BE...?
WANT-ING TO REACH THE TOP ...!
FEELING LESS AND LESS SATISFIED
OR WANTING TO FEEL HE'S THE BEST...

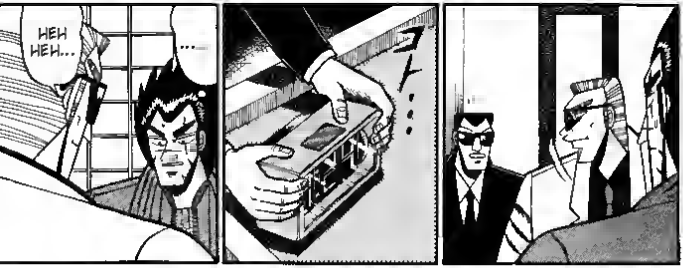
THE FINEST MOMENT.....!
EVEN FOR AN INSTANT.....!

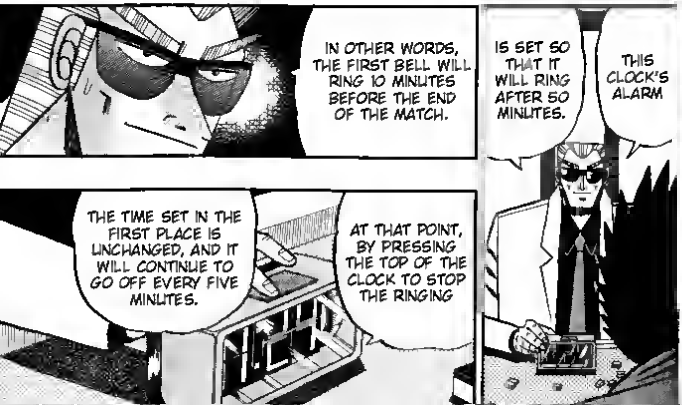

CHAPTER 105: STRANGE SITUATION
FAILING TO RESOLVE THE SHOWDOWN OF THE EAST-WEST BATTLE EVEN THROUGH CLEAR MAHJONG
THE BATTLE EXTENDED, WITH A TIME LIMIT OF ONE HOUR.
GOING INTO THE PLAY-OFFS ...!
HARA-DA FROM WEST
TEN FROM EAST
THOSE TWO GENERALS
WOULD SETTLE WHICH SIDE WOULD COME OUT ON TOP THROUGH TWO-PLAYER MAHJONG.

CHAPTER 105
STRANGE SITUATION
TWO-PLAYER MAHJONG
A STRANGE AND UNORTHODOX GAME OF MAHJONG.
WHAT KIND OF TACTICS WOULD WORK AND BE EFFECTIVE ...?
.....
HARADA.
THE ONE WHO PROPOSED IT HAD PLAYED IT BEFORE.
.....
BUT TEN ACCEPTED ...!
LIKE GRASPING AT CLOUDS.
.....
DIFFICULT TO MEASURE.
IT FELT LIKE HE WAS STILL FUMBLING AROUND.
BUT TO TEN

THE IDEA THAT THE GAME COULD BE SETTLED BETWEEN JUST THE TWO OF THEM
THE STRAIGHT-FORWARD IDEA THAT HARADA SHOWED TEN
AND AT THE SAME TIME, STIRRED HIS BLOOD.
RESON-ATED.
BEING DRAWN INTO IT
CONDEN-SED INTO ONE HOUR
A DEFINITIVE MATCH AGAINST HARADA ALONE, A POWERFUL OPPONENT
BEFORE THE BATTLE
.....
TIME WAS MORE VALUABLE THAN ANYTHING.
WHERE ABOVE ALL ELSE

WHEN ONE HOUR HAS PASSED, THE ROUND THAT WE ARE IN ENDS THE GAME.
THE MATCH IS ONE HOUR.
I'LL GO OVER IT ONCE RIGHT NOW.
ABOUT THE TIME SET FOR THIS MATCH


HEH HEH...
...
カチ...


IN OTHER WORDS, THE FIRST BELL WILL RING 10 MINUTES BEFORE THE END OF THE MATCH.
IS SET SO THAT IT WILL RING AFTER 50 MINUTES.
THIS CLOCK'S ALARM
THE TIME SET IN THE FIRST PLACE IS UNCHANGED, AND IT WILL CONTINUE TO GO OFF EVERY FIVE MINUTES.
AT THAT POINT, BY PRESSING THE TOP OF THE CLOCK TO STOP THE RINGING

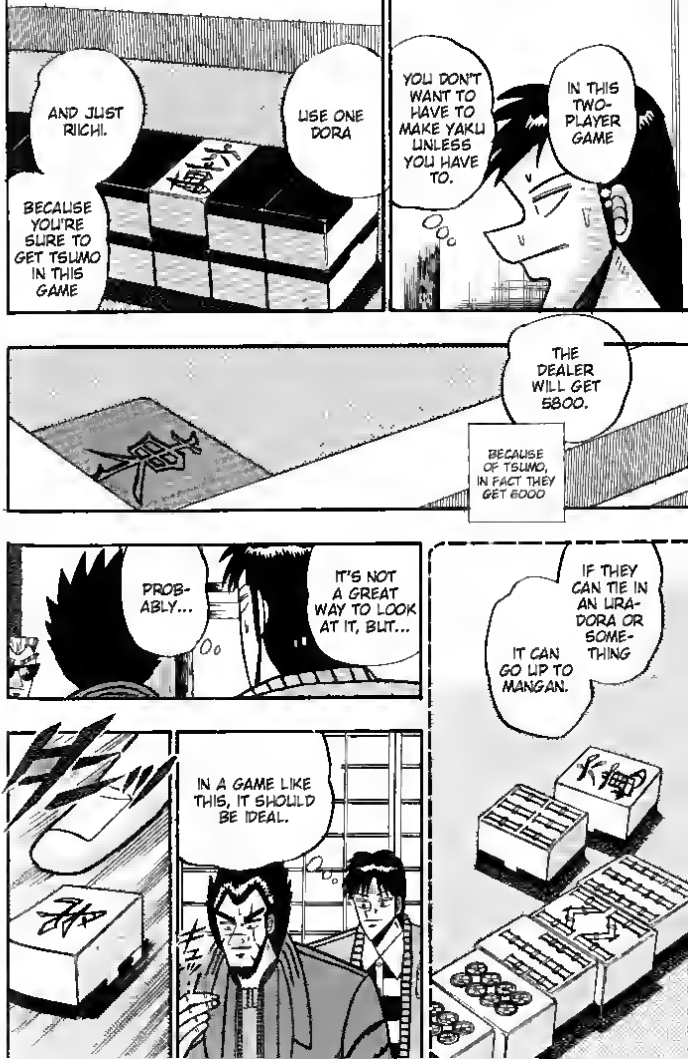
TEN MINUTES BEFORE AND FIVE MINUTES BEFORE THE END OF THE MATCH
AND ONCE TO END THE GAME.
IN SHORT, IT WILL RING THREE TIMES.
.....
THIS IS WHAT WE'LL USE.
IT'S AN ALARM CLOCK WITH A SNOOZE BUTTON.
SO THAT NEITHER OF US KNOWS THE TIME.
DURING THE MATCH THE CLOCK WILL BE FLIPPED FACE-DOWN
WILL TELL US HOW MUCH TIME HAS PASSED.
ONLY THOSE THREE TIMES
THE ONE IN THE LEAD CAN WASTE TIME BY PLAYING SLOWLY.
IF WE KNOW WHAT TIME IT IS, SECOND BY SECOND
THAT WAY WE CAN PUT ALL OTHER THOUGHTS FROM OUR MINDS.
.....
KNOWING THE BARE MINIMUM ABOUT THE TIME IS ENOUGH ...
SO THAT IT DOESN'T HAPPEN.
WE WANT TO KEEP THAT IDEA OUT OF OUR HEADS

.....
SO THAT WE CAN STAY ABSORBED IN THE GAME.
RIGHT...!
.....
THE GAME BEGAN ...!
AND SO
.....
.....

FOR RIICHI WERE GIVEN TO EACH PLAYER.
AFTER THAT, TEN 1000-POINT COUNTERS
AND IT WAS SET TO RING AT 0:50.
THE CLOCK WAS AT 0:00
THE WALL WAS SET UP.
FROM THERE ON, IT WAS AS USUAL.
TEMPORARY EAST WAS DETERMINED AND DEALER ON THE SECOND DICE ROLL.
THOSE WERE THE PREPARATIONS FOR TWO-PLAYER MAHJONG.
THE POINT COUNTERS THAT TEN AND HARADA WERE COMPETING FOR WERE PILED ON ANOTHER TABLE.
カチャ..
カチャ..
THERE WAS NO REAL DIFFERENCE IN THE FLOW OF ACTIONS.
DESPITE THAT SMALL DEVIATION FROM FOUR PLAYER MAHJONG
IN THE CASE THAT THE DEALER WAS ASSIGNED TO THE EMPTY SEATS, SOUTH OR NORTH
カチャカチャ..
IN SHORT, IF SOUTH WAS THE DEALER BY THE DICE, THE PERSON SEATED AS WEST HAD THE RIGHT TO BE DEALER.
DEALER WAS SET BY TURN ORDER.
南
西

THE FIRST DEALER WAS TEN...!
ごわ・・・
.....
IT'S A LUCKY START FOR NOW...!
THE DEALER GETS 1.5X THE NORMAL PAYMENT ON TSUMO, WITH NO DOWNSIDES TO IT.
IN THIS TWO-PLAYER GAME
IT'S POSSIBLE TO GET A LONG WAY...!
AND JUST RUNS STRAIGHT AHEAD, IN ONLY A SHORT TIME
THAT WAY, IF THE DEALER WINS QUICKLY TWO OR THREE TIMES
THE DEALER SIMPLY GETS MORE WHEN THEY WIN.

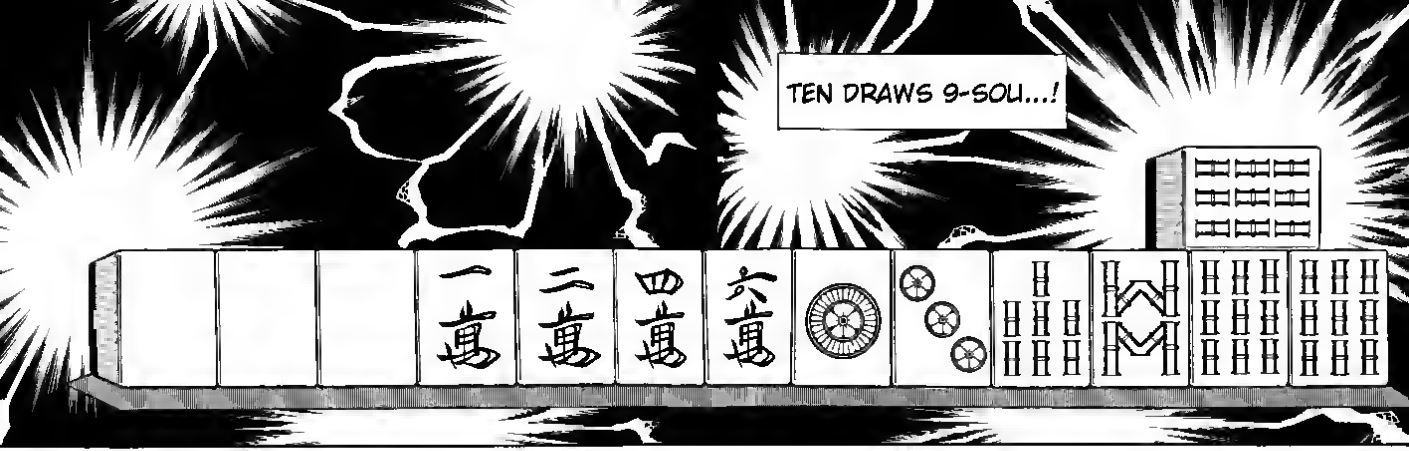
HE'LL WANT TO MAKE THE MOST OF THIS EARLY LUCK...
.....
.....
.....
IT'S TERRIBLE ...
THIS HAND LOOKS MORE LIKE CHANTA.
A LIGHTER, FASTER HAND WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER.
SINCE HE'S THE DEALER
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT...
... SHIT...
URGH ...!
TEN'S STARTING HAND...!


IN THIS TWO-PLAYER GAME
YOU DON'T WANT TO HAVE TO MAKE YAKU UNLESS YOU HAVE TO.
USE ONE DORA
AND JUST RICHI.
BECAUSE YOU'RE SURE TO GET TSUMO IN THIS GAME
THE DEALER WILL GET 5800.
BECAUSE OF TSUMO, IN FACT THEY GET 6000
IT'S NOT A GREAT WAY TO LOOK AT IT, BUT...
PROB-ABLY...
IF THEY CAN TIE IN AN URA-DORA OR SOME-THING
IT CAN GO UP TO MANGAN.
IN A GAME LIKE THIS, IT SHOULD BE IDEAL.

IT'S ALL OVER
WHEN RIICHI COMES FROM THE OTHER SIDE
IF YOU'RE CHASING AFTER YAKU
THIS IS BECAUSE
WHILE TRYING TO BE FAST
SPEED IS MORE OF A PRIORITY THAN ANYTHING ELSE.
YOU CAN'T CHASE AFTER YAKU AND THEN RIICHI
IN THIS GAME.
TO AVOID THAT
AND A HEFTY RIICHI COMES FROM ANOTHER PLAYER
IF THEY'RE SLOW TO DRAW THEIR WINNING TILE
IN NORMAL MAHJONG
THOSE THAT GO FOR FAST, CHEAP HANDS
THAT WON'T HAPPEN IN THIS TWO-PLAYER GAME...
THEY'RE PUT IN A BAD POSITION, BUT

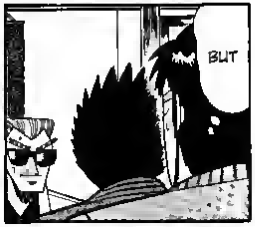
AND NO NEED TO WATCH OUT FOR SILENT TENPAI FROM YOUR OPPONENT.
SO THERE'S NO NEED TO HAVE SAFE TILES READY
YOU CAN'T DEAL IN.
IN SHORT .....
THIS GAME IS A SPRINTING MATCH.
IF NORMAL MAHJONG IS AN OBSTACLE COURSE
AND HEAD FOR TENPAI.
...SIMPLY GO STRAIGHT AHEAD...
SPRINT...
YOU CAN THINK OF IT LIKE A 100-METER RACE.
FASTER BY EVEN HALF A BODY-LENGTH...
WHO IS FASTER...
WHO CAN RUN FASTER TO THE GOAL OF TENPAI...?

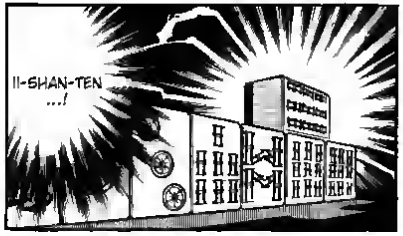
TEN, 5TH TURN
DRAWS HAKU...!
WAIT, HOLD ON .....
I'M NOT SURE HOW, BUT
IT'S STARTING TO TAKE SHAPE.
URGH ...!
10TH TURN
THIS COULD BE IT...


TEN DRAWS 9-SOU...!

THERE'S NO MORE TIME LEFT.

I GET THE FEELING HARADA IS JUST ABOUT TO RIICHI...


BUT

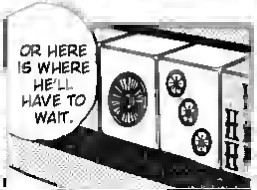

II-SHAN-TEN ...!
HE'S GOT IT ...!

!...

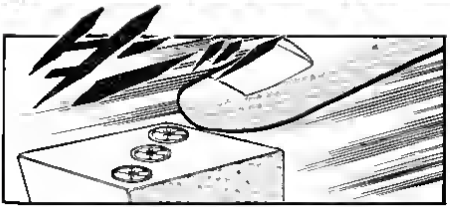
WELL... THE SAFEST CHOICE AS THE DEALER ...?
TAKING THAT THREE-HOLE II-SHAN-TEN IS

IT'S A 2-4-6-MAN DOUBLE MIDDLE WAIT AND THIS 1-3-PIN MIDDLE WAIT.
IF HE PLAYS 1-MAN HERE
SO...

AND HERE...?


OR HERE IS WHERE HE'LL HAVE TO WAIT.

HE'LL HAVE TO DEAL WITH THE 4-MAN AND 6-MAN
IF HE'S AIMING FOR CHANTA WITH THIS HAND



TEN ...!
BUT... BUT

PLAYED 3-PIN ...!
HUH...?

WHY DID HE DO THAT...?
THAT'S CRAZY ...
HE PLAYED 3-PIN ...?
.....
AND HE NEVER MOVED ON IT...
IS SOMETHING HE HAD SINCE HIS STARTING HAND
THAT MIDDLE WAIT ON 2-PIN
THAT'S...
BUT...
HE MUST HAVE HAD THE FEELING HE WASN'T GOING TO DRAW IT...
IN HARADA'S DISCARDS
THERE'S TWO 2-PIN
WHICH MEANS
HIROYUKI WAS CONFUSED
EVEN IF THAT'S TRUE, WHY WOULD HE PLAY 3-PIN FROM THIS HAND...

IT WAS INCOMP-REHENS-IBLE
WHEN HE HAD THE FEELING THAT SOON

RIICHI...!
HARADA WOULD RIICHI.

URGH ...!
HIROYUKI'S QUESTIONS WERE SET ASIDE
IS THE SITUATION CHANGED.
AGAINST HARADA'S RIICHI

WERE WRONG.
AS HARADA'S "WAIT"
THE TWO TILES TEN CHOSE FROM THE OTHER TABLE TO DESIGNATE
THEN HARADA HAD THE RIGHT TO DRAW FIVE TIMES.
.....
ON THE FOURTH ...!
ガニ...

TSUMO...!
ハラッ...
HARADA WON BY TSUMO ...!
URGH ...!
THIS WIN
RIICHI, TSUMO, 1 DORA FOR 3900 (GETTING 4000)
WASN'T A TERRIBLY HIGH AMOUNT.
BUT
WHAT'S ... THAT ...?
RIICHI IS ALSO POSSIBLE ON THIS HAND.
MENZEN TSUMO, TAN-YAO, PIN-FU, DORA, 3-SIDED WAIT...
BUT DESPITE THAT...
HIROYUKI WAS STAGGERED BY THE IMPLICATIONS.
WHY WAS HE WAITING ON A 2-SOU...?
HE HAD THE 7-SOU, THE TILE HE DECLARED RIICHI WITH, IN HIS HAND.

WHY A CLOSED WAIT ON 2-SOU...?

AN UN-ORTH-ODOX PRIN-CIPLE...
THIS BEGAN TO CREATE AN UNUSUAL SITUATION IN THE GAME OF TWO-PLAYER MAHJONG.
HIROYUKI DIDN'T GRASP ITS MEANING INSTANTLY.
URGH ...
KEEPING A CLOSED WAIT AND ABANDONING A THREE-SIDED WAIT ...!
THE LOGIC OF A STRANGE SITUA-TION

CHAPTER 106
ILLUSION

ざわ…
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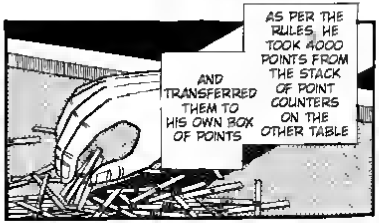
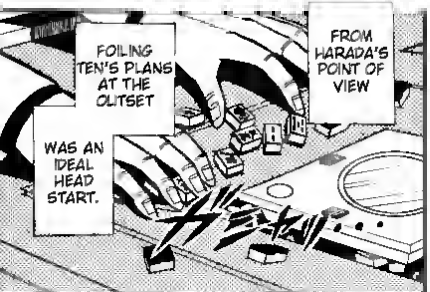
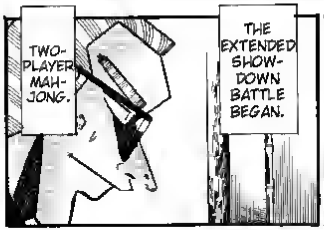
ざわ…

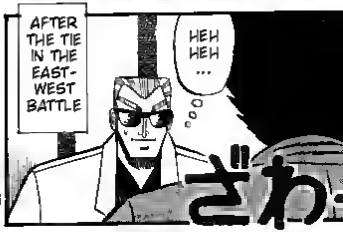
AND AT THE SAME TIME, THE DEALER ALSO CHANGED.
NOW HE WAS IN THE LEAD

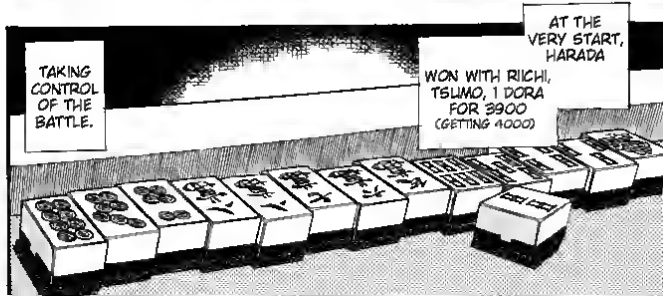

AND TRANSFERRED THEM TO HIS OWN BOX OF POINTS
AS PER THE RULES, HE TOOK 4000 POINTS FROM THE STACK OF POINT COUNTERS ON THE OTHER TABLE


FOILING TEN'S PLANS AT THE OUTSET
WAS AN IDEAL HEAD START.
FROM HARADA'S POINT OF VIEW

…
TEN WAS KICKED FROM THE DEALER'S POSITION


TWO-PLAYER MAH-JONG.
THE EXTENDED SHOW-DOWN BATTLE BEGAN.


AFTER THE TIE IN THE EAST-WEST BATTLE
HEH HEH…
ざわ…


TAKING CONTROL OF THE BATTLE.
AT THE VERY START, HARADA WON WITH RICHI, TSUMO, 1 DORA FOR 3900 (GETTING 4000)

THE SECOND BATTLE
HARADA HAD MOMEN-TUM BEHIND HIM.
ON THE OTHER HAND, TEN WAS IN THE SAME POSITION
WITH A BAD STARTING HAND AND DRAWS.
HIS HAND WAS NOT COMING TOGE-THER.
IGNORING HIM, ON THE 8TH TURN, HARADA
GOT IT...!

RIICHI...!
A GAME WHERE SPEED HAD PRIORITY.
NOT GIVING TEN A CHANCE TO COUNTER-ATTACK.
AND THEN
WITHOUT A DELAY, AN IMMEDIATE RIICHI!
チラ!
PREDICTING HARADA'S TENPAI.
TEN WAS PLACED ON DEFENSE AGAIN.
.....

BUT HE MISSED.
HE PICKED TWO TILES
AND THE NEXT
THE NEXT
MISSING FOUR TIMES...!
WHILE THAT WAS GOING ON
.....

GH...!

HARADA DREW AND WON ...!
RIICHI, TSUMO, 1 DORA
WITH A CLOSED WAIT ON 8-MAN ...!
AGAIN ABANDONING A MULTI-SIDED WAIT FOR A CLOSED WAIT...!
AT THIS POINT
...I GET IT.
ざわ..
THE THING YOU COULD CALL A BASIC PRINCIPLE OF THIS TWO-PLAYER GAME...
FUNDAMENTAL WAY OF PLAYING.
AS EXPECTED, HIROYUKI FIGURED IT OUT.
ざわ..
ざわ

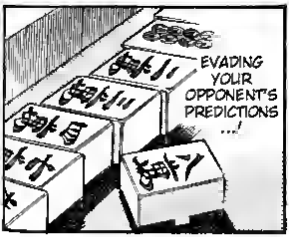
IF YOU'RE IN A SITUATION WHERE YOU CAN CHOOSE EITHER
YOU SHOULD TAKE THE CLOSED OR END WAIT, WITHOUT HESITATION.
IT'S BASICALLY MORE OF AN ADVANTAGE TO HAVE A CLOSED OR END WAIT RATHER THAN A MULTI-SIDED WAIT.
IN THIS TWO-PLAYER GAME
.....

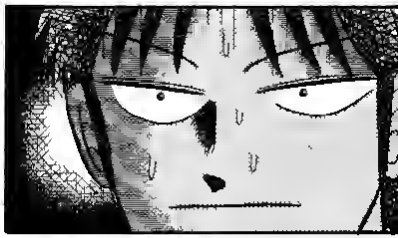
THINGS LIKE A FOLLOW-UP RIICHI HURTING THE PERSON WHO DECLARED RIICHI FIRST... IN THIS TWO-PLAYER GAME
THIS IS BECAUSE.....

ALL THAT MATTERS IS THE QUESTION OF IF IT CAN BE FIGURED OUT.....
OR IF THEY CAN DRAW WHAT THEY NEED FIRST... THAT'S THE FIGHT.
WHEN ONE SIDE DECLARES RIICHI
THAT WILL NEVER HAPPEN...

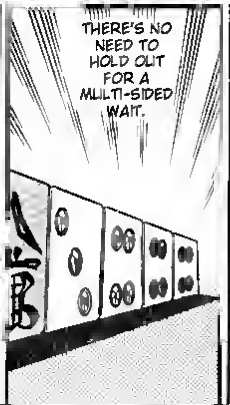
THE RULES ARE THAT AS LONG AS THE ENEMY DOESN'T GUESS RIGHT, YOU GET ALMOST UNLIMITED DRAWS.
IN THIS GAME
ACTUALLY, YOU CAN SEE IT AS AN ADVANTAGE.
THERE'S NO REAL RISK TO A BAD WAIT.

IN SHORT, THE 14 TILES OF THE DEAD WALL
AND THE TILES IN YOUR OPPONENT'S HAND ARE THE TILES YOU CAN'T WIN FROM
SO NO MATTER HOW BAD THE WAIT IS, YOU CAN STILL WIN BY TSUMO.
THAT MEANS A MULTI-SIDED WAIT AN AN END OR CLOSED WAIT ARE BASICALLY THE SAME.
SO THEN
USE AN END OR CLOSED WAIT INSTEAD OF A TWO-SIDED OR MULTI-SIDED ONE
IF IT'S A CLOSED OR END WAIT
YOUR OPPONENT HAS TO PICK OUT THAT SINGLE WINNING TILE.
WHEN IT'S A MULTI-SIDED WAIT
SAY, ON 2-5-8-MAN
IF HE GUESSES ANY OF THEM, IT'S OVER.
NATURALLY, IT'S EASY TO DETECT IT.
OF COURSE, THAT MAKES IT EASY TO TSUMO TOO, BUT
SAYING IT'S EASY TO TSUMO
HAS NO REAL MEANING
BECAUSE YOU'LL GET TO DRAW YOUR WINNING TILE AT SOME POINT...
SO INSTEAD THE PROBLEM IS...


EVADING YOUR OPPONENT'S PREDICTIONS ...!



NO MATTER HOW HARD TO PREDICT AND BAD THE WAIT IS
AND ...
THOUGH IT'S EASY ENOUGH TO WIN

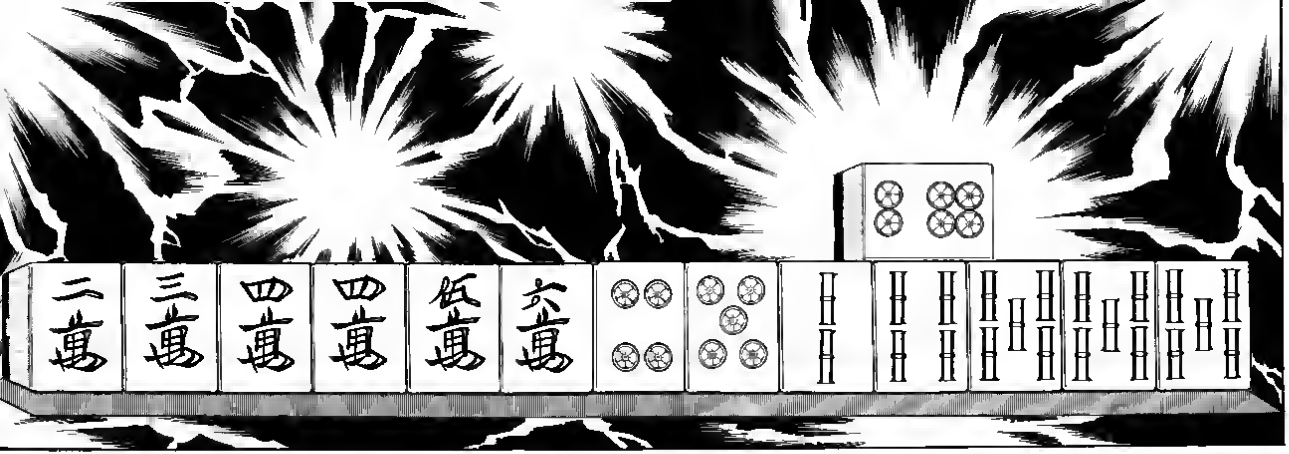

THERE'S NO NEED TO HOLD OUT FOR A MULTI-SIDED WAIT.

AS LONG AS HIS PREDICTION IS WRONG, YOU CAN WIN.

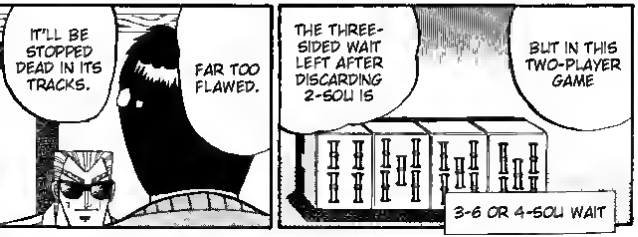
WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT
SO INSTEAD THE OPPOSITE PATTERN WILL OFTEN EMERGE
THIS IS A RACE TO TENPAI, WITH THE PRIORITY BEING ON SPEED.
YOU CAN'T ALWAYS GO INTO TENPAI ON A CLOSED OR END WAIT.
WHICH MEANS ...
NATURALLY LEAVING THIS.
IT'S BETTER TO ARRANGE THE TILES TO HAVE TWO-SIDED OR MULTI-SIDED WAITS.
UP UNTIL II-SHAN-TEN, RATHER THAN CLOSED OR END WAITS
AND BY DOING SO NEATLY GIVES THE IMPRESSION
HE HAD THE CHANCE TO WIN FROM THIS ODD CLOSED WAIT
HARADA'S WAIT THIS TIME WAS ODD.
INEVITABLY THOUGH TENPAI WITH A GOOD WAIT SHOWED UP
YOU CAN SLIP IN A TIDY VICTORY.
AND TAKING THAT CHANCE WHILE THE ENEMY, SEEING DEMONS AT EVERY TURN, IS PICKING OUT END TILES
CLOUDING A PERSON'S EYES TO .. THE ONE TIME IT BECOMES TENPAI WITH A GOOD MULTI-SIDED WAIT.
THAT IT COULD GO EITHER WAY.

IT MAY BE MAINLY A DISTRATION.
BEHIND HARADA'S CLOSED-WAIT STRATEGY
PROB-ABLY
THAT'S THE HIDDEN MEANING
.....
IS HIS TRUE GOAL.
WHEN A GOOD TENPAI COMES ALONG
BEING ABLE TO WIN, EVEN
WHILE IT'S EASY ENOUGH FOR HIM TO WIN
IT'S EASY TO JUST GET INTO TENPAI AND RIICHI RIGHT AWAY, NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS.
IN SHORT, IN THIS TWO-PLAYER MAHJONG THAT PRIORITIZES SPEED OVER EVERYTHING ELSE
WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT LIKE THAT
YOU BEGIN TO SEE THE REALITY BEHIND THIS TWO-PLAYER MAHJONG
ONE WAY OF DOING THAT IS THROUGH HARADA'S CLOSED-WAIT STRATEGY.
THE DIVIDING LINE IN THIS GAME IS HOW TO INCREASE YOUR CHANCES WITH THAT TENPAI AND RIICHI...

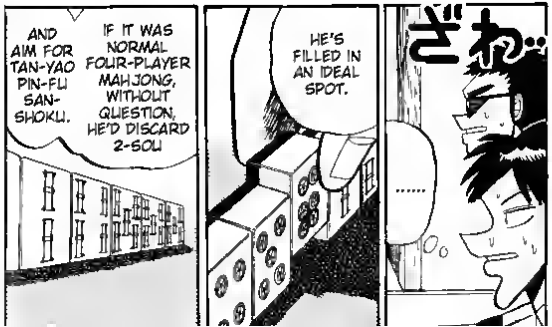
DURING THE BATTLE
HOW EFFECTIVE IS USING AN ILLUSION LIKE THAT...?
IN THIS TWO-PLAYER MAHJONG
THAT'S THE DIVIDING LINE...
WHILE HARADA CONTINUES TO WIN
HE KEEPS MAKING THE ILLUSION STRONGER.
YOU CAN'T DENY THAT TEN IS FALLING BEHIND.
IT'S NOT SIMPLY A MATTER OF POINTS ...
BUT...
WITHOUT REGARD FOR HIROYUKI'S CONCERNS
IN THE 3RD BATTLE
TEN GOT IT
FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE STARTING THIS GAME.



A STRONG FLOW...!


IT'LL BE STOPPED DEAD IN ITS TRACKS.
FAR TOO FLAWED.
THE THREE-SIDED WAIT LEFT AFTER DISCARDING 2-SOU IS
BUT IN THIS TWO-PLAYER GAME
3-6 OR 4-SOU WAIT

HE'LL DISCARD 5-SOU NOW FOR A CLOSED WAIT...?
IF HARADA FIGURES IT OUT, HE'LL LOSE EVERYTHING.
SO THEN, CAREFULLY
IT'LL BE A COMEBACK IN ONE BLOW, BUT
IF TEN CAN WIN WITH THIS SAN-SHOKU
THE DISTANCE FROM HARADA RIGHT NOW IS 10,000.


AND AIM FOR TAN-YAO PIN-FU SAN-SHOKU.
IF IT WAS NORMAL FOUR-PLAYER MAHJONG, WITHOUT QUESTION, HE'D DISCARD 2-SOU
HE'S FILLED IN AN IDEAL SPOT.
ざわ..
.....

RIICHI ...!
HUH ...?

3-6-SOU OR 4-SOU THREE-SIDED WAIT...!?
YES...
HE'LL SEE THROUGH IT RIGHT AWAY.
A WAIT LIKE THAT...
...TH ...THAT'S CRAZY .....
BUT RIGHT AWAY
.....
THAT IT WAS A 3-6-SOU OR 4-SOU WAIT.
IT SEEMS LIKE THE FIRST THING THAT HARADA WOULD CALL ON.
AND THEN THE SECOND PICKS WERE ALSO
HUH ...?
THE DORA, CHUN, AND 5-MAN
HARADA'S FIRST PICKS WERE

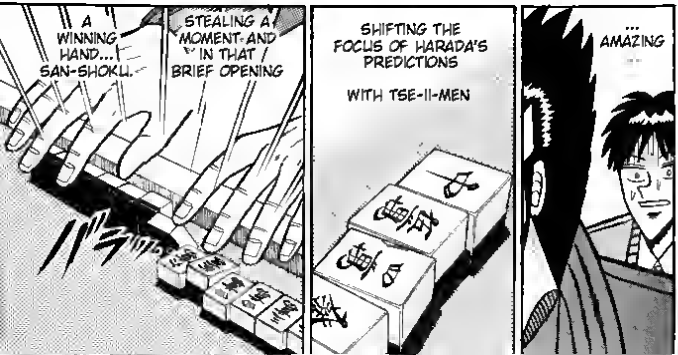
.....
IRRELEVANT. 4-MAN AND HATSU.
ざわ..!
HE'S USING TSE-II-MEN DISCARDS...
.....
.....
ざわ..
THIS IS...
WHAT'S GOING ON ...?
ざわ..!
.....
TEN DID IT IN THE FIRST, SECOND, AND NOW IN THE THIRD ROUND.
HUH...?
OH...!
THE TSE-II-MEN DISCARDS ARE MAKING HARADA MISREAD THE SITUATION.

AT THAT TIME, HIS HAND WAS LIKE SO.
THERE WAS THAT MYSTERIOUS DISCARD OF THE 3-PIN IN THE FIRST GAME.
... NOW THAT HE MENTIONS IT.
一萬 二萬 四萬 六萬
HIS DISCARDS LOOKED LIKE THIS.
東 北 中
KNEW HARADA WOULD DECLARE RIICHI FIRST.
AT THE TIME, TEN
六萬
I SEE...
HE SAW IT...
PRIORITIZING TSE-II-MEN DISCARDS.
HE GOT READY
SO RATHER THAN ADVANCE THE HAND HE HAD
六萬

THE BASIC STRATEGY IN THIS TWO-PLAYER MAHJONG IS
CREATION OF AN ILLUSION .....
YES...
I'M SURE OF IT.. HIS DISCARDS IN THE SECOND GAME WERE LIKE THIS.
AND THEN LIKE THIS, THIS TIME...
THREE TSE-II-MEN DISCARD SETS IN A ROW.
HARADA KEEPS SEEING THESE TSE-II-MEN DISCARDS
AND CONSCIOUSLY ASSUMES A ONE-SUIT HAND.
FEARING THE WORST, HE PICKS OUT CHUN AND MANZU
THE RESULT IS... THIS BLATANTLY OBVIOUS 3-6-SOU OR 4-SOU WAIT
IS LEFT UNTIL LATER ...

URGH.

HE GOT IT...!
...

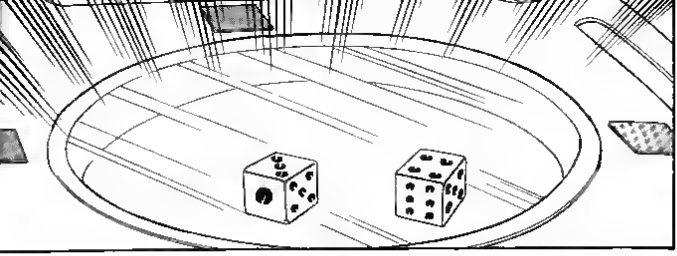

A WINNING HAND...! SAN-SHOKU.
STEALING A MOMENT AND IN THAT BRIEF OPENING
SHIFTING THE FOCUS OF HARADA'S PREDICTIONS
WITH TSE-II-MEN
...AMAZING

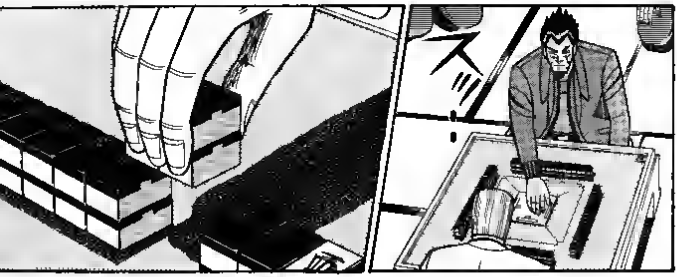
A GOOD HIT...! WINNING THE HAND, AS PLANNED ...!
NARROWLY SLIPPING IT IN...

天
CHAPTER 107
FLOW

ざわ・・
ざわ・・
TEN MADE A SURPRISE ATTACK.....!
IN THE FIRST AND SECOND BATTLES, TEN HAD LET HARADA WIN, BUT
HE WAS BACK WITH A GOOD STARTING HAND IN THE THIRD BATTLE.
MENZEN TSUMO, TAN-YAO, PIN-FU, SAN-SHOKU: HANEMAN...!
HE PICKED UP 12,000 POINTS FROM THE OTHER TABLE.
NOW HE'D OVERTAKEN HARADA WHO HAD 10,000 POINTS
PUTTING HIM IN THE LEAD BY 2,000
AND GIVING HIM THE RIGHT TO BE DEALER.....!
.....
.....
MAYBE HE'LL MAKE A BREAK FOR IT...
.....THE WAY THINGS ARE NOW... HE'S GOT THE OPPORTUNITY...
ガシャッ

I GET THE FEELING HE'S GOING TO TRY TO..!!
ゴトッ..
ゴトッ..
ゴトッ..
カチャッ..
カチャッ..
カチャッ..

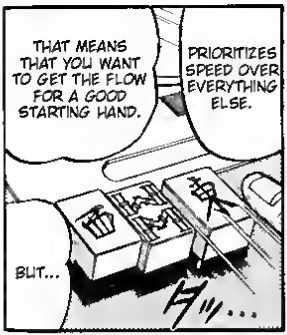




.....

IF HE CAN GRAB THE FLOW OR NOT ...!
HE'LL KNOW WITH THIS STARTING HAND
.....

CAN HE RUN WITH IT...? OR NOT...?
HUH ...?
...IT'S GONE TOO FAR...
THAT FEELING I HAD MIGHT HAVE REALLY HIT THE MARK...
.....
THERE IT IS...!
URGH...!
THAT'S WHAT I THINK.....
WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT THIS TWO-PLAYER GAME, IT CAN GO TOO FAR, TOO.
HAVING THE FLOW FAVOR YOU, WELL.... THAT'S FINE, BUT
YEAH ...
GONE TOO FAR...?
.....
A GOOD STARTING HAND, WITH THREE GROUPS ALREADY ...!


THAT MEANS THAT YOU WANT TO GET THE FLOW FOR A GOOD STARTING HAND.
PRIORITIZES SPEED OVER EVERYTHING ELSE.
BUT...

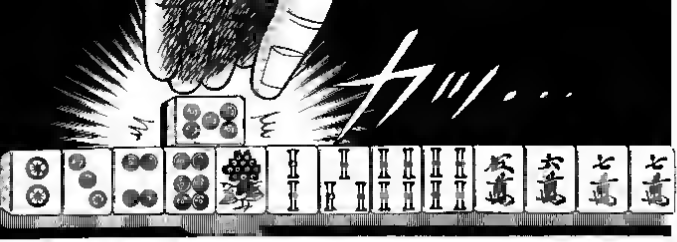
THIS TWO-PLAYER MAHJONG

.....
.....WHAT DO YOU MEAN ..?

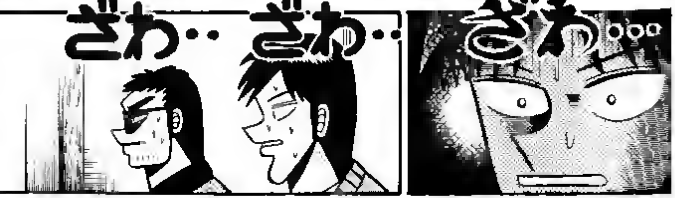
7TH TURN

IT DRAGS YOU DOWN ...

?...
BEING "OFF TO A GOOD START" CAN ALSO BACKFIRE.


カッ…

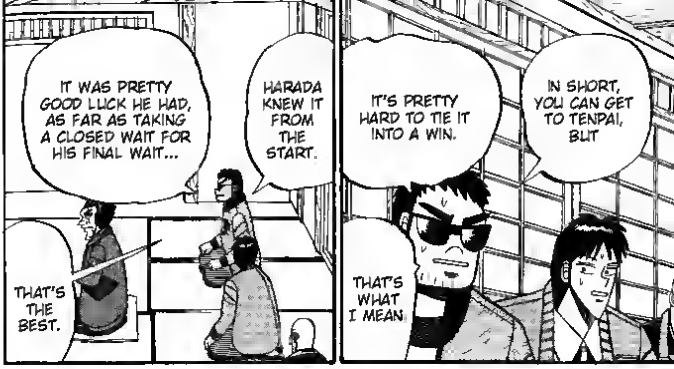
1-4-7-PIN WAIT...!
TENPAI ...!
URGH...!

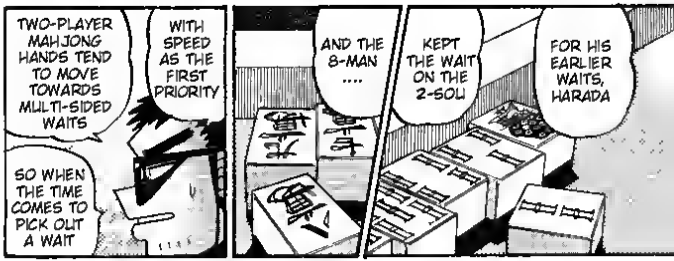

ざわ..
ざわ..
ざわ...

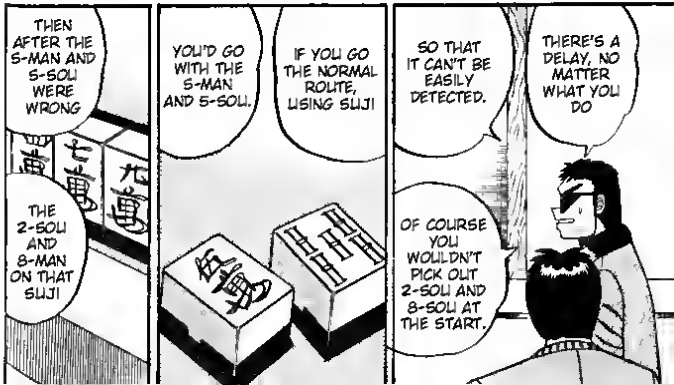
.....
IT'S A BIT DIFFERENT HERE.
BUT... IN TWO-PLAYER MAHJONG
NO PROBLEM AT ALL.
IN FOUR-PLAYER MAHJONG, THIS THREE-SIDED WAIT IS IDEAL.
WHEN HE GETS A HAND LIKE THIS...
THIS IS IT ...

RIICHI ...!
AGAINST TEN'S RIICHI
HARA-DA
.....
CRUSH-ING HIM...!
URGH ...!
FIGURING OUT HIS WAIT WITH HIS FIRST PICK.
PICKED OUT 6-PIN AND 4-PIN

THAT EASILY.....!
WITHOUT EVEN GIVING TEN THE CHANCE TO DRAW...
ざわ...
HEH HEH...
HAVING THE FLOW IN YOUR FAVOR MAKES IT EASY TO GET A PROPER DOUBLE-SIDED WAIT...
AND NATURALLY, THAT'S EASY FOR THE OPPONENT TO DETECT.
SEE...!
THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS.
ざわ...
ざわ...

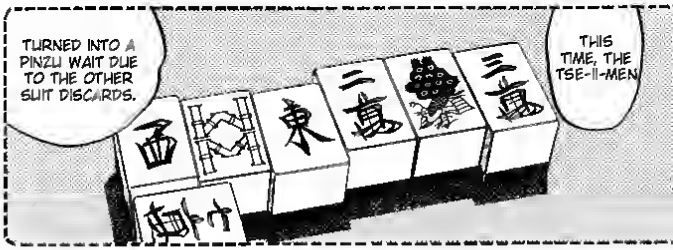

IT WAS PRETTY GOOD LUCK HE HAD, AS FAR AS TAKING A CLOSED WAIT FOR HIS FINAL WAIT...
HARADA KNEW IT FROM THE START.
THAT'S THE BEST.
IT'S PRETTY HARD TO TIE IT INTO A WIN.
IN SHORT, YOU CAN GET TO TENPAI, BUT
THAT'S WHAT I MEAN.

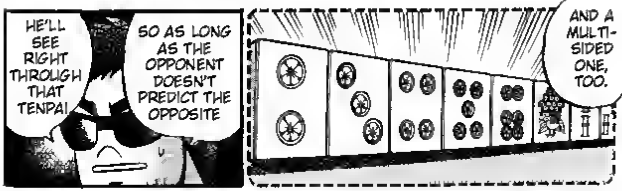

TWO-PLAYER MAHJONG HANDS TEND TO MOVE TOWARDS MULTI-SIDED WAITS
WITH SPEED AS THE FIRST PRIORITY
SO WHEN THE TIME COMES TO PICK OUT A WAIT
AND THE 8-MAN ....
KEPT THE WAIT ON THE 2-SOU
FOR HIS EARLIER WAITS, HARADA

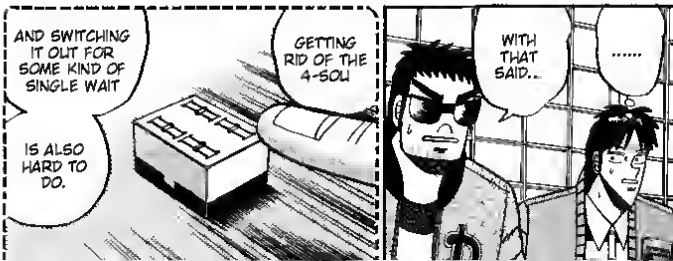

THEN AFTER THE 5-MAN AND 5-SOU WERE WRONG
THE 2-SOU AND 8-MAN ON THAT SUJI
YOU'D GO WITH THE 5-MAN AND 5-SOU.
IF YOU GO THE NORMAL ROUTE, USING SUJI
SO THAT IT CAN'T BE EASILY DETECTED.
THERE'S A DELAY, NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO
OF COURSE YOU WOULDN'T PICK OUT 2-SOU AND 8-SOU AT THE START.

.....
HAS ENSURED THAT THEY'LL KEEP GETTING A CHANCE TO DRAW...
THAT WAY, THE SIDE THAT DECLARED RIICHI
BECOME INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO PICK OUT...
IS IDEAL ...
MIXING IN A MODERATE AMOUNT OF MULTI-SIDED WAITS
CLOSED AND END WAITS.....
THE BASIS FOR THIS TWO-PLAYER GAME IS DEFINITELY
TSE-II-MEN IS A STYLE OF PLAY THAT WILL INVOLVE A LOT OF LOSSES.
AS A KIND OF NOVEL STRATEGY... AN IRREGULAR WAY OF PLAYING...
IT FEELS LIKE HE'S NOT LISTENING TO THE "FLOW".
TEN'S TSE-II-MEN STRATEGY IS INTERESTING, BUT
AS WE SAW BEFORE, IT'S ALSO EFFECTIVE AT MAKING THE OPPONENT DELAY PICKING OUT AN OBVIOUS 3-6-SOU OR 4-SOU WAIT.
BECAUSE THE OPPONENT IS WATCHING FOR A ONE-SUIT OR OTHER HIGH-VALUE HAND
OF COURSE, IF HE DOES WELL
IN SHORT, IT MAKES IT HARD TO GET INTO TENPAI.

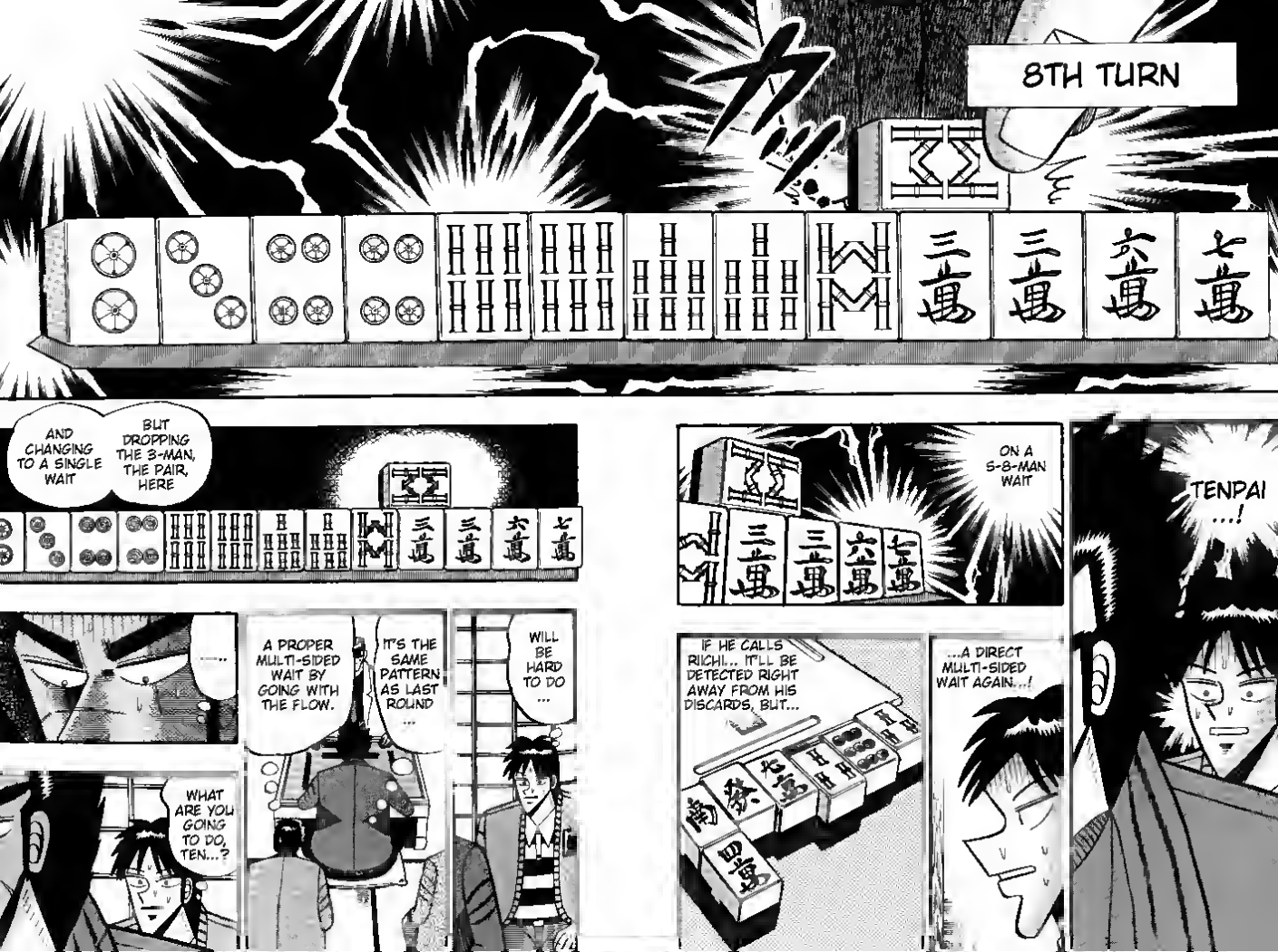
IT BACKFIRED THIS TIME...
BUT...


TURNED INTO A PINZU WAIT DUE TO THE OTHER SUIT DISCARDS.
THIS TIME, THE TSE-II-MEN

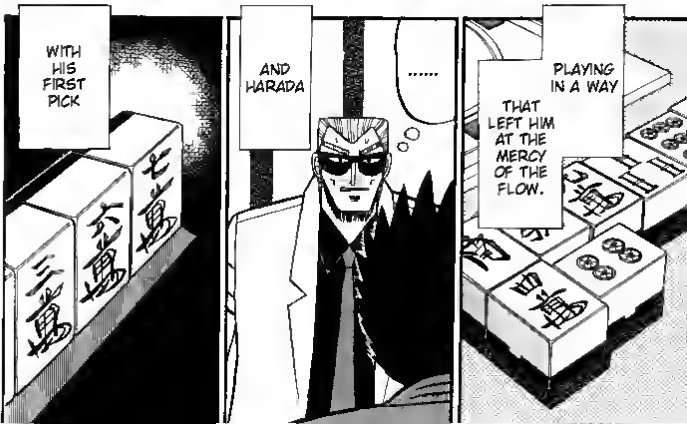

HE'LL SEE RIGHT THROUGH THAT TENPAI
SO AS LONG AS THE OPPONENT DOESN'T PREDICT THE OPPOSITE
AND A MULTI-SIDED ONE, TOO.

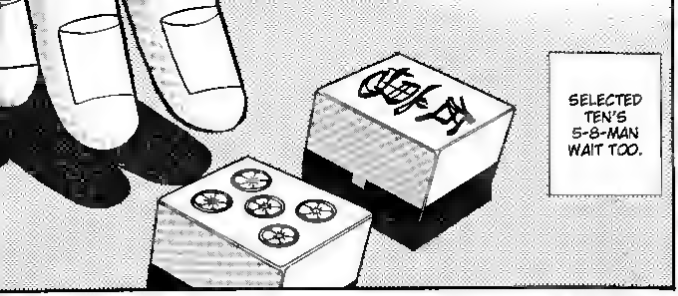

AND SWITCHING IT OUT FOR SOME KIND OF SINGLE WAIT
IS ALSO HARD TO DO.
GETTING RID OF THE 4-SOU
WITH THAT SAID...
.....

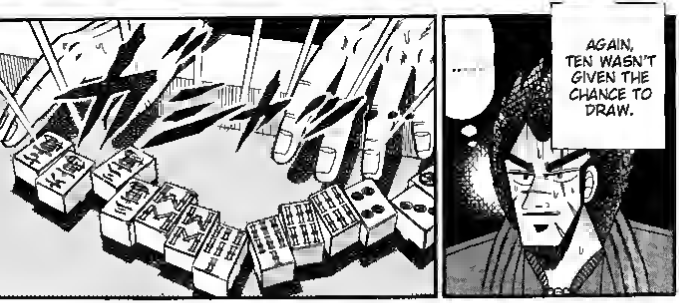
LOSING IT IS OUT OF THE QUESTION.
EY
EVEN IF THE "FLOW" IS TOO GOOD, YOU STILL DON'T WANT THAT ..
COULD END UP BEATING BACK THE FAVORABLE FLOW
A TWISTED WAY OF PLAYING LIKE THAT, WHERE YOU'RE BREAKING UP TENPAI
THAT YOU'VE BEEN TRYING TO GET.
SO FROM THAT CONCLUSION, ALL HE CAN DO
5TH BATTLE
WITH THIS HAND RIGHT NOW, IS DISCARD 7-MAN AND RIICHI.
IT WAS GOING IN TEN'S FAVOR FOR THE 5TH BATTLE TOO

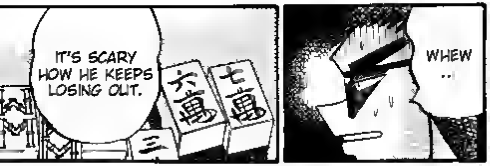

8TH TURN
三萬
三萬
六萬
七萬
AND CHANGING TO A SINGLE WAIT
BUT DROPPING THE 3-MAN, THE PAIR, HERE
三萬
三萬
六萬
七萬
.....
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO, TEN...?
A PROPER MULTI-SIDED WAIT BY GOING WITH THE FLOW.
IT'S THE SAME PATTERN AS LAST ROUND ...
WILL BE HARD TO DO ...
ON A 5-8-MAN WAIT
三萬
三萬
六萬
七萬
IF HE CALLS RICHI... IT'LL BE DETECTED RIGHT AWAY FROM HIS DISCARDS, BUT...
南
發
四萬
...A DIRECT MULTI-SIDED WAIT AGAIN...!
TENPAI ...!

RIICHI ...!
TEN WENT STRAIGHT AHEAD...
.....


WITH HIS FIRST PICK
AND HARADA
.....
PLAYING IN A WAY THAT LEFT HIM AT THE MERCY OF THE FLOW.


SELECTED TEN'S 5-8-MAN WAIT TOO.


AGAIN, TEN WASN'T GIVEN THE CHANCE TO DRAW.
.....


IT'S SCARY HOW HE KEEPS LOSING OUT.
WHEW
..

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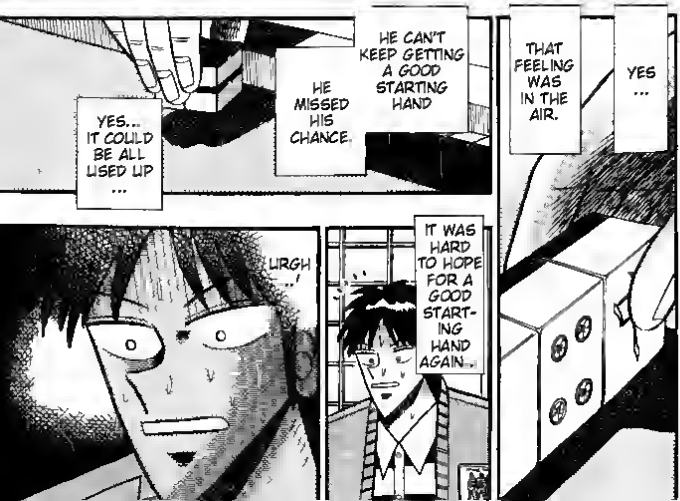
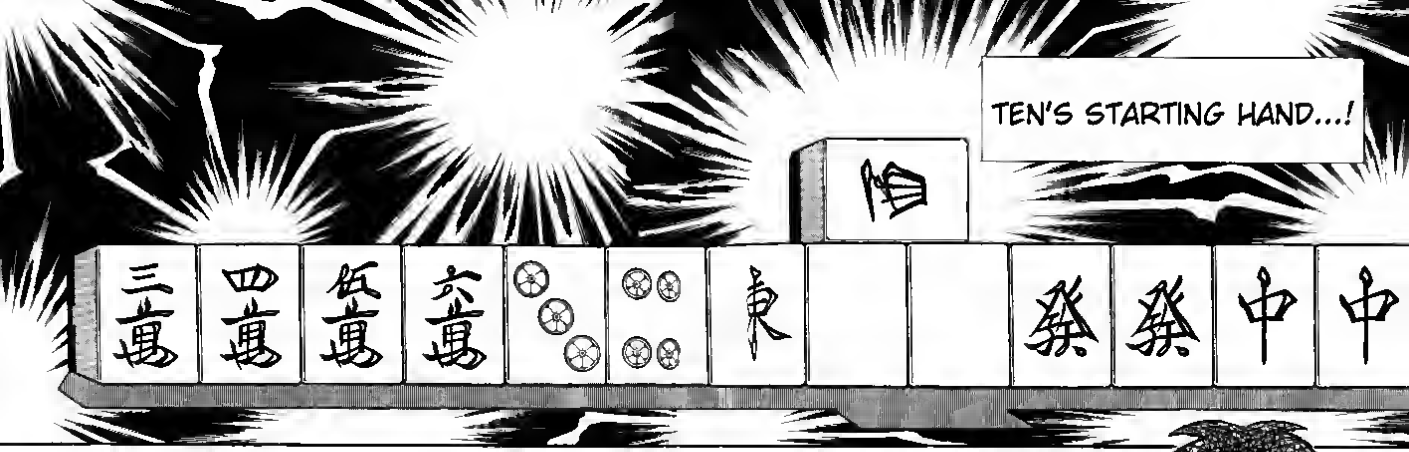
.....

THE FLOW WILL END UP TURNING BACK TOWARD HARADA.
AND IF THIS HAPPENS ENOUGH
.....

HE'LL SOON START TO STRUGGLE ...
MAYBE ..
AND CAN'T GET IN A DECENT WIN
WHEN YOU HAVE THE FLOW LIKE THAT
HE CAN'T KEEP GETTING SUCH GOOD STARTING HANDS AND DRAWS.
BY MISSING THOSE TWO CHANCES TO WIN IN A ROW
ス〃〃...
.....
THE FLOW ...
I WONDER IF IT'LL GO BACK TO HARADA...
カチャ...
カチャ...
ピ〃...
カチャ..


YES...
IT COULD BE ALL USED UP ...
HE MISSED HIS CHANCE.
HE CAN'T KEEP GETTING A GOOD STARTING HAND
THAT FEELING WAS IN THE AIR.
YES ...
URGH ...!
IT WAS HARD TO HOPE FOR A GOOD START-ING HAND AGAIN...


TEN'S STARTING HAND...!

....HE'LL HAVE ENOUGH FOR BAIMAN.
AND THE DORA IS CHUN.
NO...

HON-ITSU, SHOU-SAN-GEN...

A HAND THAT WOULD SETTLE THIS MATCH!

.. ...
スッ...

EVEN DAI-SAN-GEN COULD BE POSSIBLE...

IT'S THE BEST STARTING HAND ...!
MAYBE, FOR THIS BATTLE...
SO THAT'S WHAT IT BROUGHT THIS TIME ...
GH ...!

ざわ...

IF HE CAN MAKE THIS HAND, HE CAN WIN...!
.....
TEN
.....
....
HE MIGHT BE ABLE TO TAKE CONTROL OF THIS TWO-PLAYER GAME ...!

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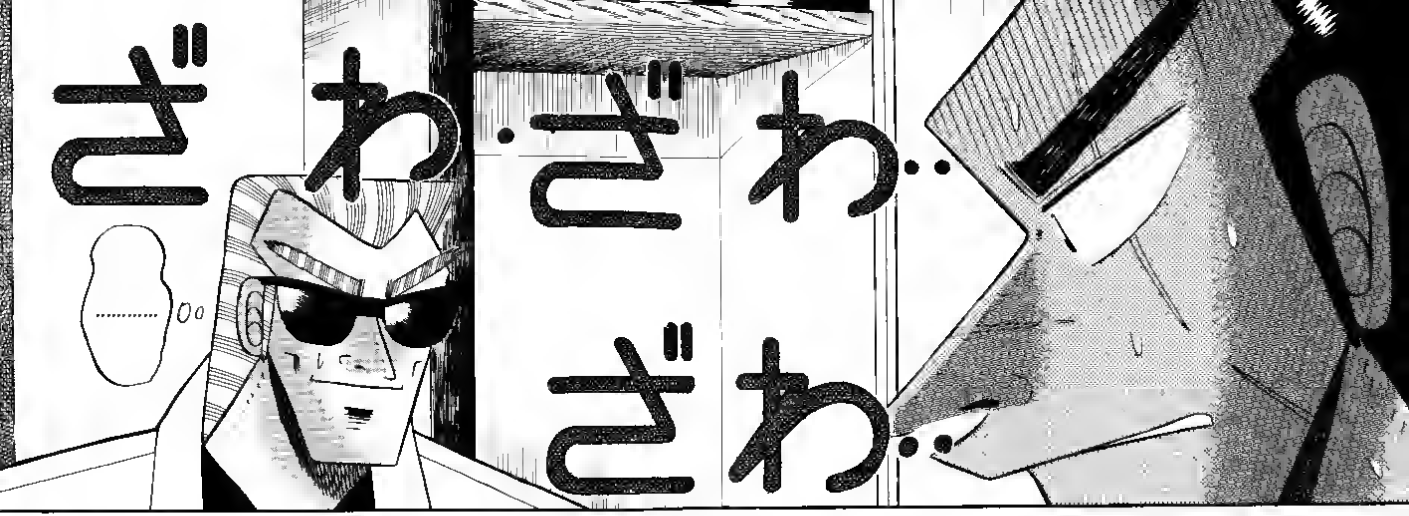
CHAPTER 108

MAXIMUM


ざわ
ざわ
ざわ
.....

SINCE THIS TWO-PLAYER GAME BEGAN
WITHOUT QUESTION, THE BEST HAND
TEN GOT A HAND THAT HAD A CHANCE ...!

IN THE 6TH BATTLE

A PLAYOFF GAME BETWEEN HARADA AND TEN
WITH A TIME LIMIT OF ONE HOUR
IT QUICKLY BECAME

TWO-PLAYER MAH-JONG.

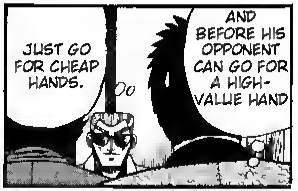
ACCEPTING THE TIED GAME IN THE EAST-WEST BATTLE'S CLEAR MAHJONG SHOWDOWN

A POWERFUL SETUP...!
AND THE NUMBER OF POINTS
IF HE DID, THE CONFRONTATION SO FAR
TEN: 12,000
HARADA: 10,000
HE'D GET 24,000 POINTS.
IF THE DEALER, TEN, COULD GET HIS HAND READY FOR BAIMAN
A TURNING POINT...
HARADA: 10,000
TEN: 36,000
WOULD CHANGE DRAMATICALLY.
FIRST OF ALL...
A HAND YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO CHEAPEN.
HON-ITSU, SHOU-SAN-GEN
2 DORA.
WITHOUT PUSHING IT TOO HARD, BAIMAN.
AS A BONUS, THE DORA WAS CHUN.
ALL THE PAIRS NEEDED FOR DAI-SAN-GEN.

THE HAND SEEMED TO BE TAKING THE WRONG PATH!

TEN 36,000
HARADA 10,000
IF HE GETS THAT 26,000 POINT LEAD, HE'LL BE SAFE FOR THE TIME BEING
THERE'S NO DEALING IN, IN TWO-PLAYER MAHJONG.

THIS LONG BATTLE ...



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HE'LL GET CONTROL OVER THE EAST-WEST BATTLE...!

IF HE CAN'T WIN
BUT
.....

SO FAR, TEN MISSED WINNING TWICE.
THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE FLOW WILL COME AROUND.....!
LITTER HUMILIATION...
CRUSHING HIM EASILY.....
HARADA PICKED IT OUT RIGHT AWAY, NOT EVEN GIVING HIM A CHANCE TO DRAW.
IT WAS EASY TO PREDICT.
HE GOT AS FAR AS RIICHI, BUT.....
IT HAS TO CHANGE
IF HE FAILS THREE TIMES, THE FLOW WILL CHANGE
THE TIDE WILL EBB ...!
IF THIS HAND IS CRUSHED LIKE THAT TOO.....
THAT'S HOW THE GAME GOES.....
IT'S INEVITABLE...!

THIS WAS THE TURNING POINT.
TEN KNEW THIS TOO.

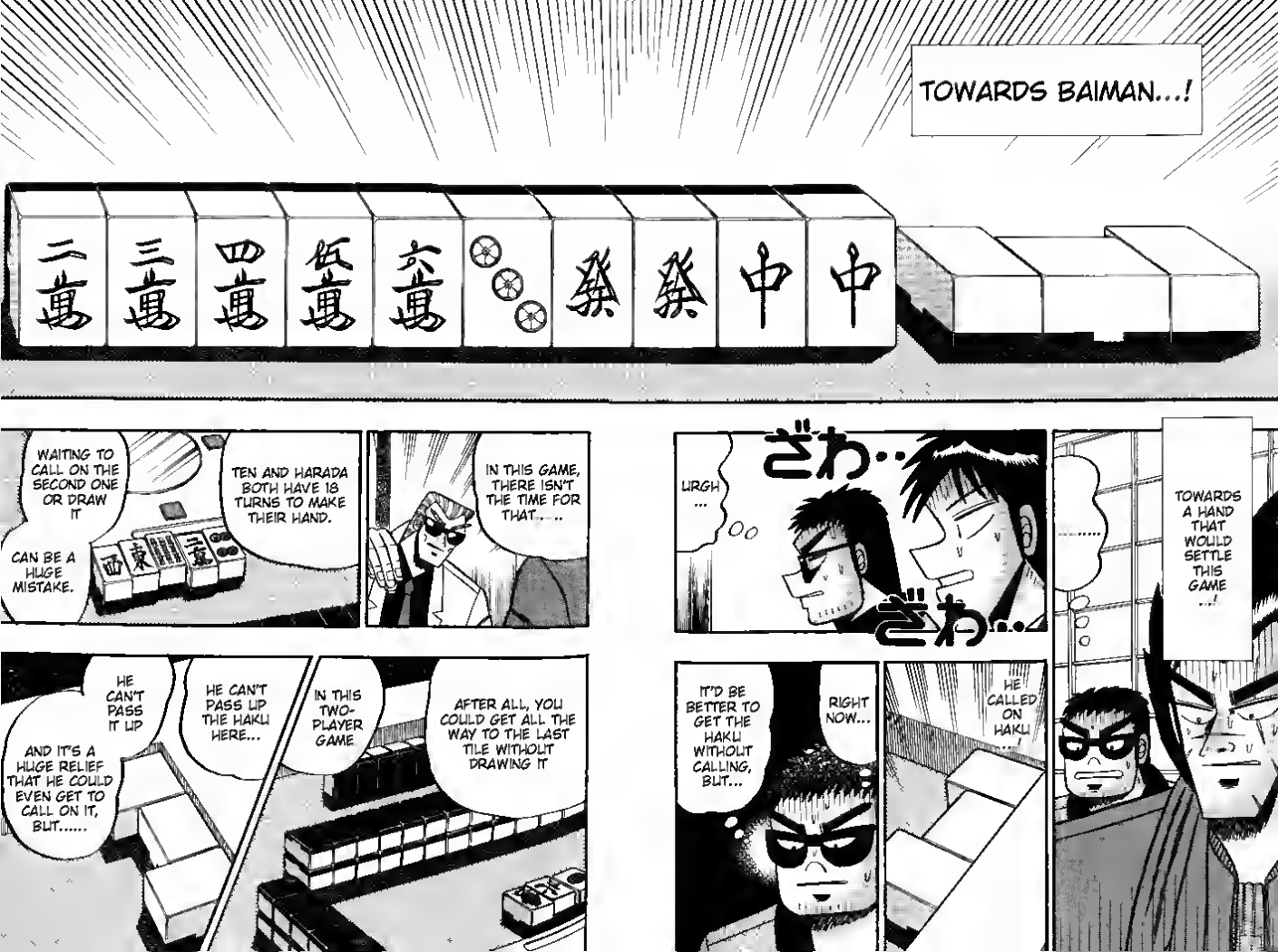
YES

HE HAD TO MAKE IT THROUGH, NO MATTER WHAT IT TOOK.
.....

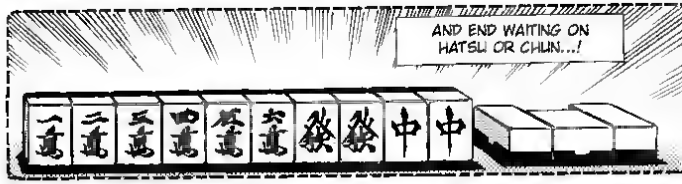
TO DO THAT, AT THE SAME TIME AS GETTING TO TENPAI QUICKLY
HE MUST AVOID SHOWING HIS HAND...
THAT WAS WHY HE DISCARDED 2-MAN EARLY ON.
THE EARLY DISCARD OF THE 2-MAN HURT A LITTLE, WHEN TEN WAS AIMING FOR MANZU HON-ITSU.
IF IT WENT POORLY, IT COULD SLOW HIS HAND .....
BUT...
TO AVOID BEING DETECTED AND GET THE CHANCE TO DRAW IN THIS TWO-PLAYER MAHJONG GAME
HE HAD TO PLAY LIKE THIS.

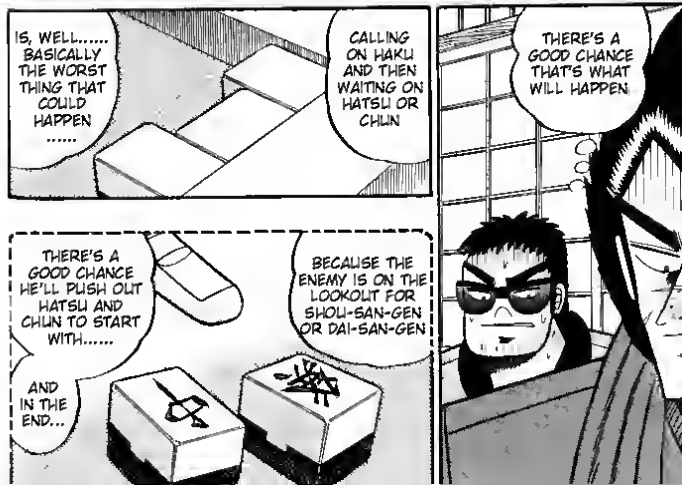
IF HE DIDN'T, EVEN IF HE GOT INTO TENPAI WITH THIS HAND
HE HAD TO TAKE CARE OF THE MANZU EARLY TO ERASE ALL TRACES OF HON-ITSU.
GET RID OF IT EARLY ON.
THE EARLY DISCARD OF 2-MAN.
SO TO AVOID THAT
IT WOULD BE EASILY DETECTED AND BE SUNK WITHOUT EVEN BEING GIVEN THE CHANCE TO DRAW.
SO THAT HE COULD GET A CHANCE TO DRAW ...!
PRE-PARA-TION
ON THE 4TH TURN, THE SAME TURN AS THAT EARLY 2-MAN DISCARD
AND THEN

URGH ...!
ONE OF THE SAN-GEN TILES... HAKU...!
IT WAS RELEASED .....!
HE MOVED ...!
PON .....!
FOR-WARD ...!
ADVANCE ...
TEN MOVED FORWARD ...!

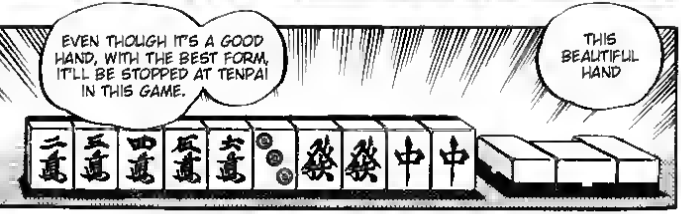

TOWARDS BAIMAN...!
WAITING TO CALL ON THE SECOND ONE OR DRAW IT
CAN BE A HUGE MISTAKE.
TEN AND HARADA BOTH HAVE 18 TURNS TO MAKE THEIR HAND.
IN THIS GAME, THERE ISN'T THE TIME FOR THAT...
URGH...
ざわ..
ざわ..
TOWARDS A HAND THAT WOULD SETTLE THIS GAME...!
HE CAN'T PASS IT UP
AND IT'S A HUGE RELIEF THAT HE COULD EVEN GET TO CALL ON IT, BUT.....
HE CAN'T PASS UP THE HAKU HERE...
IN THIS TWO-PLAYER GAME
AFTER ALL, YOU COULD GET ALL THE WAY TO THE LAST TILE WITHOUT DRAWING IT
IT'D BE BETTER TO GET THE HAKU WITHOUT CALLING, BUT...
RIGHT NOW...
HE CALLED ON HAKU...!

HE'LL FILL THE 1-4-7-MAN WAIT
THROUGH THE USUAL CHANGES A HAND LIKE THIS TAKES
IS ACTUALLY EASY TO PREDICT.
BUT..... NOW, THE SHAPE TENPAI WILL TAKE


AND END WAITING ON HATSU OR CHUN...!

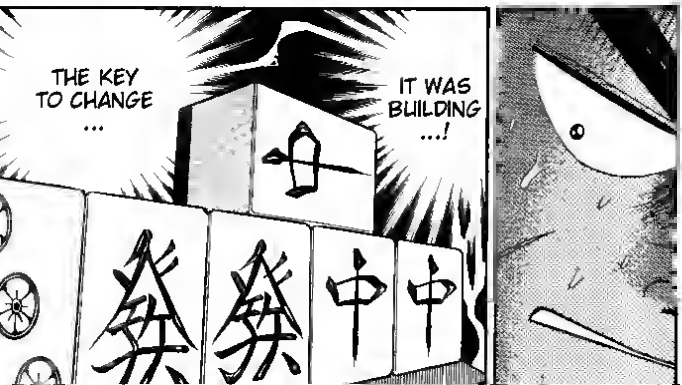

IS, WELL..... BASICALLY THE WORST THING THAT COULD HAPPEN .....
CALLING ON HAKU AND THEN WAITING ON HATSU OR CHUN
THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE THAT'S WHAT WILL HAPPEN
THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE HE'LL PUSH OUT HATSU AND CHUN TO START WITH.....
BECAUSE THE ENEMY IS ON THE LOOKOUT FOR SHOU-SAN-GEN OR DAI-SAN-GEN
AND IN THE END...

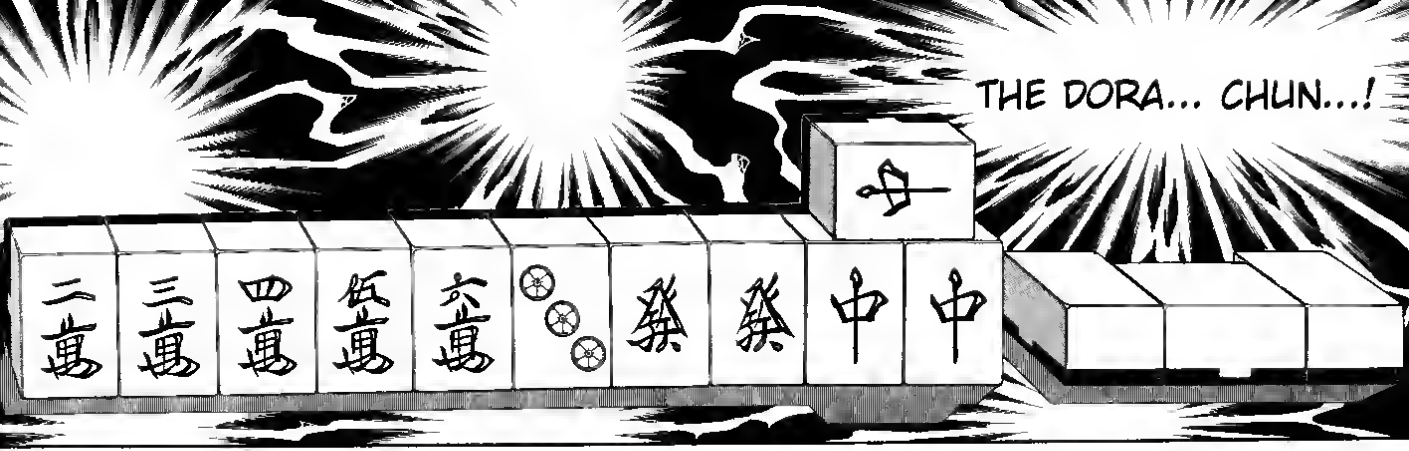
.....

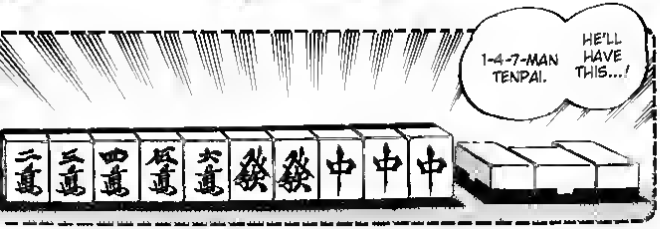

EVEN THOUGH IT'S A GOOD HAND, WITH THE BEST FORM, IT'LL BE STOPPED AT TENPAI IN THIS GAME.
THIS BEAUTIFUL HAND

TEN.....
.....
Ooo
ウ〜ン

BUT... NEXT TURN ...!
BROUGHT THE OPPOSITE ....


THE KEY TO CHANGE ...
IT WAS BUILDING ...!


THE DORA... CHUN...!


1-4-7-MAN TENPAI.
HE'LL HAVE THIS...!

.....
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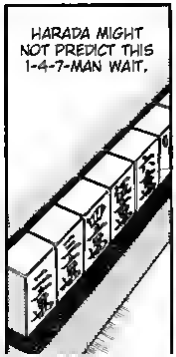
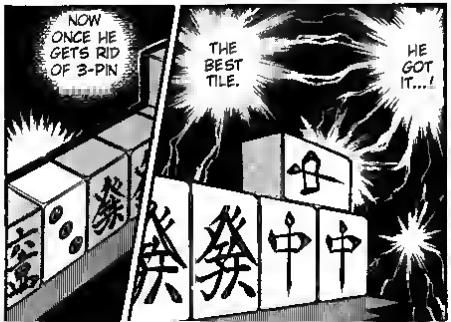
IT'S WAY TOO BOLD, BUT.....
IT'S MUCH BETTER THAN THE HATSU OR CHUN WAIT.....


HARADA MIGHT NOT PREDICT THIS 1-4-7-MAN WAIT.

TENPAI FOR A HAND THAT WOULD BASICALLY SETTLE THIS GAME.
HON-ITSU SHOU-SAN-GEN 3 DORA


NOW ONCE HE GETS RID OF 3-PIN
THE BEST TILE.
HE GOT IT...!

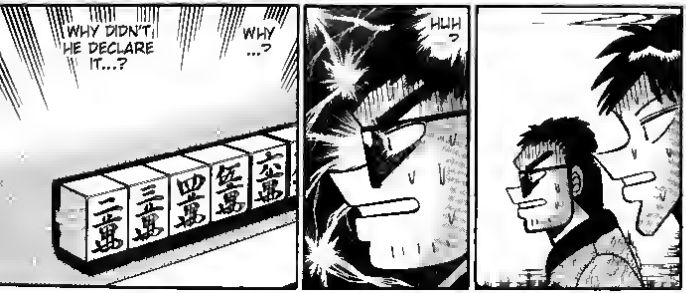
ざわ..
ざわ...

DECLARE TENPAI ...!
DON'T HESITATE ...
HE WON'T PREDICT THAT IT'S A MANZU HON-ITSU SO EASILY.
FROM THESE DISCARDS

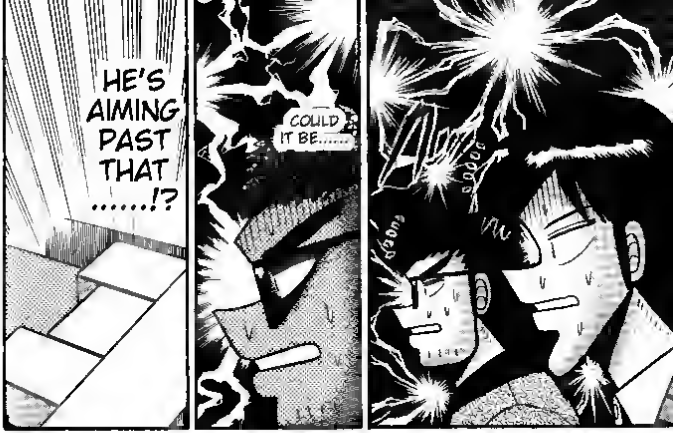
TEN...
BUT...
THERE'S NOTHING MORE YOU COULD ASK FOR .....
THIS IS THE LAST STOP.

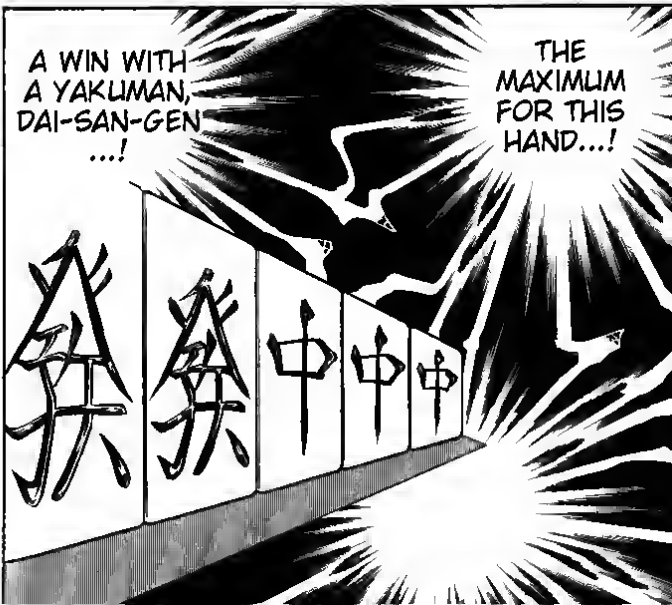
PLAYED THE 3-PIN
ダニッ!!!

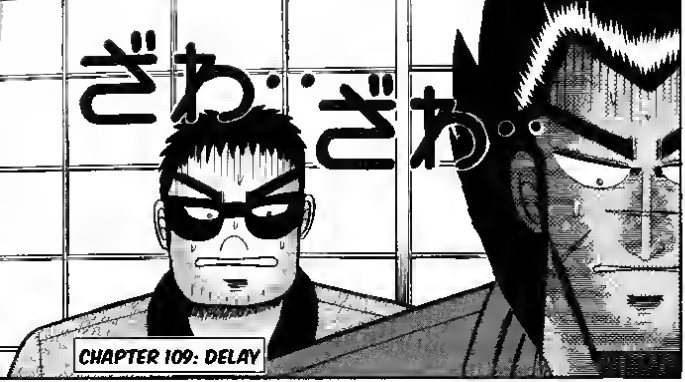
WITHOUT DECLARING ...!


WHY DIDN'T HE DECLARE IT...?
WHY ...?
HUH?

WHY ...?
DESPITE THAT..... WHY...?
HESITATING ONE TURN CAN KILL YOU IN THIS MATCH.
IF YOU'RE READY FIRST IN THIS GAME YOU SHOULD RAISE YOUR VOICE, THAT'S ALL THERE IS TO IT.

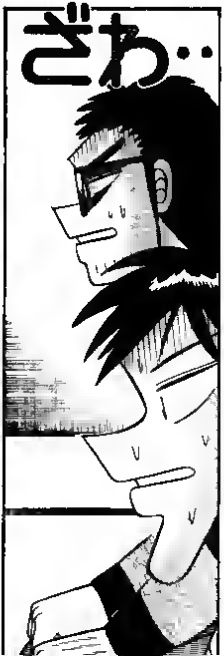

HE'S AIMING PAST THAT .....!?
COULD IT BE.....


A WIN WITH A YAKUMAN, DAI-SAN-GEN ...!
THE MAXIMUM FOR THIS HAND...!


ざわ・ざわ・・
CHAPTER 109: DELAY

THAT'S CRAZY.....!

IT'S STILL GOING TOO FAR...!
EVEN IF IT'S FOR THAT MUCH...
中 中 中
発 発
六萬
伍萬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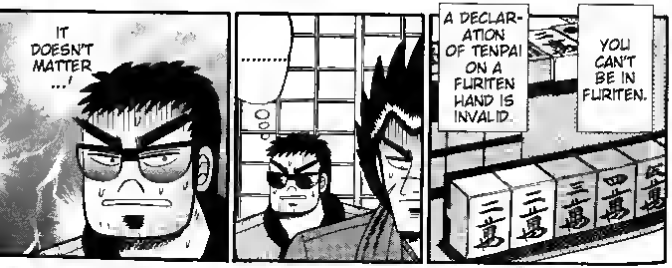
MADNESS.....!

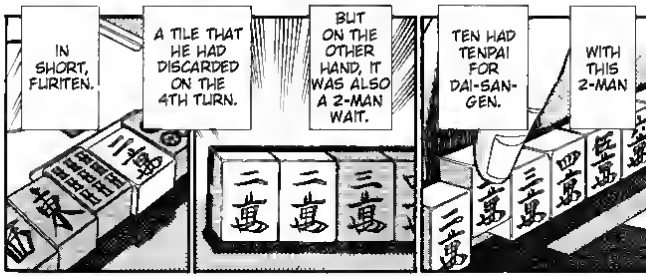
SURE ...
HE GOT THE CRITICAL CHUN THAT HE NEEDED.
IT'S NOT THAT IT DOESN'T SEEM LIKE
HE CAN EXTEND THIS HAND ALL THE WAY TO DAI-SAN-GEN.
BUT THE REALITY IS, WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT THIS HAND...
THIS THREE-SIDED WAIT ON 1-4-7-MAN
A BAIMAN HAND, WITH HON-ITSU, SHOU-SAN-GEN CHUN, 3 DORA, IS WHAT HE SHOULD PLAY.
.....BECAUSE.....
IF IT GOES AS TEN'S PLANNING
EVEN IF THIS HAND MAKES IT TO TENPAI FOR DAI-SAN-GEN
AT THAT TIME, PROBABLY
IT WILL BE THIS!
A DOUBLE PAIR WAIT ON HATSU AND A MANZU TILE

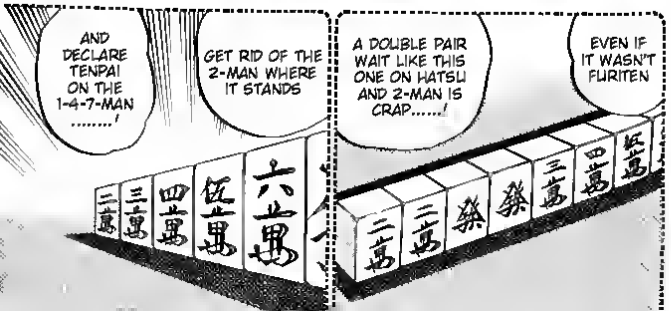
SO AFTER REVEALING HAKU AND WITH THE HINT OF HON-ITSU IN THE AIR..
WAITING ON HATSU...
IN THIS GAME ...
HE HAS TO AVOID BEING FIGURED OUT BY HIS OPPONENT
WOULD BE THE WORST THING TO DO.....
THAT'S THE FIRST PLACE HE'D LOOK.
トゥ...
AND ..
GET OUT OF THAT HATSU WAIT...!
HE HAS TO AVOID THAT...!
"DECL-ARING" TENPAI IS A STRICT RULE.
GETS THE RIGHT TO WIN A HAND IN THIS TWO-PLAYER MAHJONG.
IF YOU LAG BEHIND .....
NO... ONLY THE ONE WHO "DECLARES" FIRST
THE ONE IN TENPAI FIRST ...
HE'S GOT A FAST HAND TOO.
HARADA'S HAND IS STARTING TO FILL OUT.

TEN...
IF THAT HAPPENS TO THIS BAIMAN ...
THAT'D BE HORRIBLE.
YOU'RE SUNK, WITHOUT THE CHANCE TO DRAW AGAIN...
IF YOUR OPPONENT "DECLARES" BEFORE YOU DO
EVEN IF YOU'RE IN TENPAI FIRST
TEN.....!
WHATEVER YOU DRAW NEXT, JUST "DECLARE"...
ON THAT 1-4-7-MAN.....!
DON'T HESITATE.....!

DREW 2-MAN...!


IT DOESN'T MATTER ...!
A DECLARATION OF TENPAI ON A FURITEN HAND IS INVALID.
YOU CAN'T BE IN FURITEN.


IN SHORT, FURITEN.
A TILE THAT HE HAD DISCARDED ON THE 4TH TURN.
BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, IT WAS ALSO A 2-MAN WAIT.
TEN HAD TENPAI FOR DAI-SAN-GEN.
WITH THIS 2-MAN


AND DECLARE TENPAI ON THE 1-4-7-MAN .....!
GET RID OF THE 2-MAN WHERE IT STANDS
A DOUBLE PAIR WAIT LIKE THIS ONE ON HATSU AND 2-MAN IS CRAP.....!
EVEN IF IT WASN'T FURITEN

SO
THE BATTLE GOES INTO PREDICTING THAT TENPAI.
IN TWO-PLAYER MAHJONG, AFTER THE TENPAI FIGHT
AND YOU COULD JUST GO FOR IT ANYWAY ..... BUT.....
IN FOUR-PLAYER MAHJONG, YOU COULD TSUMO IN FURITEN...

GO FOR IT...! TEN...!
BUT .....
TEN PLAYED 2-MAN
AND EVEN THEN .....
NO DECLAR-ATION ...!
LIN-MOVING ...!
GH....!
WHAT'S HE DOING !?

THE ENEMY ...!
HE'S GOING TO CALL OUT...!
FOR NO REASON
WHILE HE'S HOLDING BACK
COULD IT BE !?
IT WENT IN ...!
000

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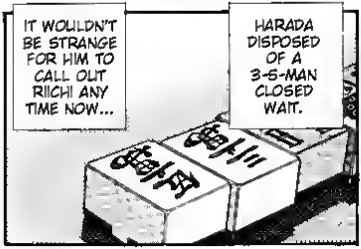
西/A


IT WOULDN'T BE STRANGE FOR HIM TO CALL OUT RIICHI ANY TIME NOW...
HARADA DISPOSED OF A 3-6-MAN CLOSED WAIT.

MADE IT, BUT ONLY FOR ONE MORE TURN.

WE'VE MADE IT...

PHEW...
.....

STILL NO TENPAI.
BUT NO DECLAR-ATION YET.

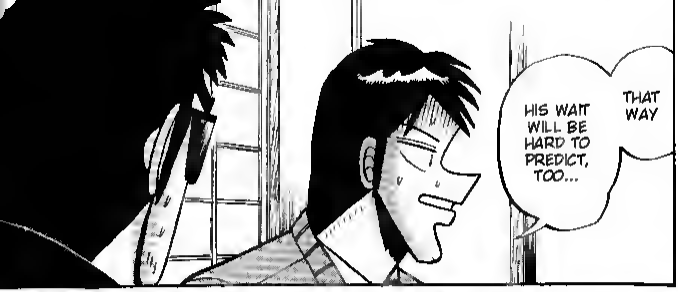
HE HAD TO DECLARE NEXT TURN, NO MATTER WHAT...!
HE DOESN'T HAVE TIME TO BE AIMING FOR THAT DAMN DAI-SAN-GEN.
EVEN IF HE GETS TENPAI FOR DAI-SAN-GEN
IT'LL BE SOME DOUBLE PAIR WAIT USING HATSU
AND THAT .....
IS AN UNREACHABLE DREAM... DAI-SAN-GEN WOULD BE STOPPED AT TENPAI...
THAT POINT
EVEN THOUGH TEN HAS TO BE AWARE OF IT
WHY IS HE DOING THIS ...
HE'S LOST HIS MIND ...!

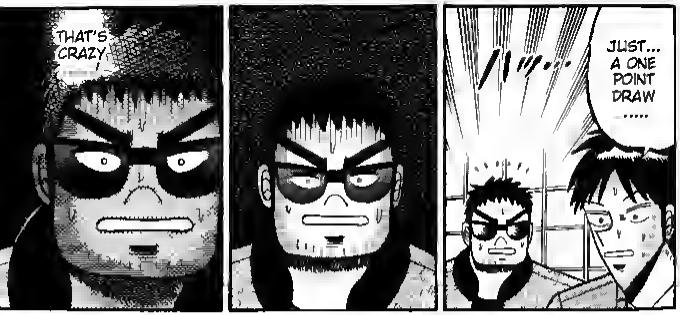
HUH ...?
GOING FOR ONE POINT ...?

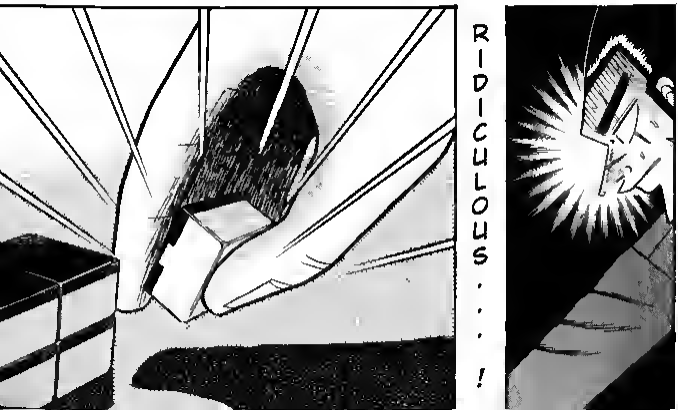
COULD HE BE...

ハッ...

.....
GOING FOR DAI-SAN-GEN...


THAT WAY
HIS WAIT WILL BE HARD TO PREDICT, TOO...

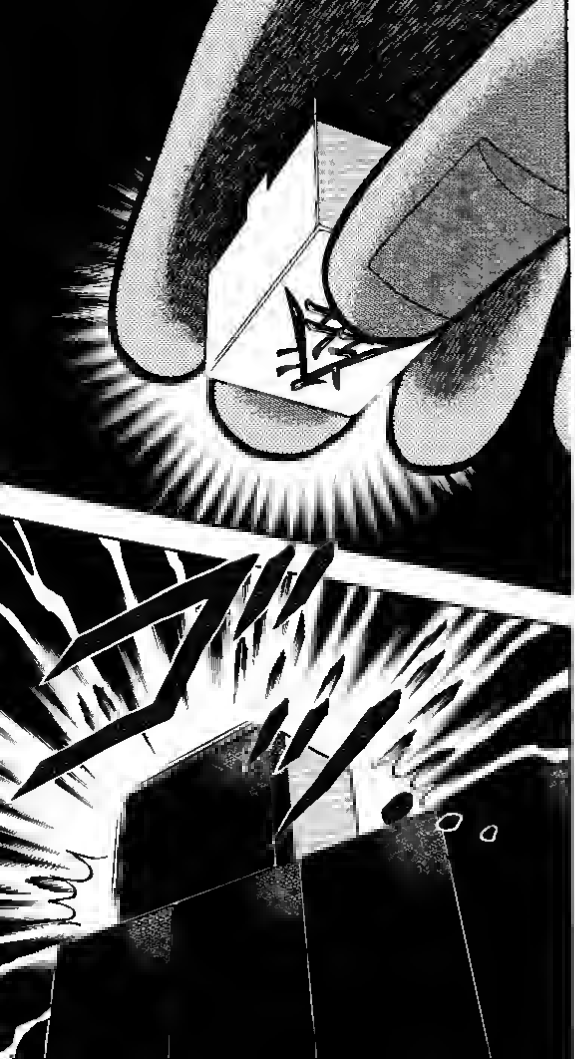

THAT'S CRAZY!
JUST... A ONE POINT DRAW .....

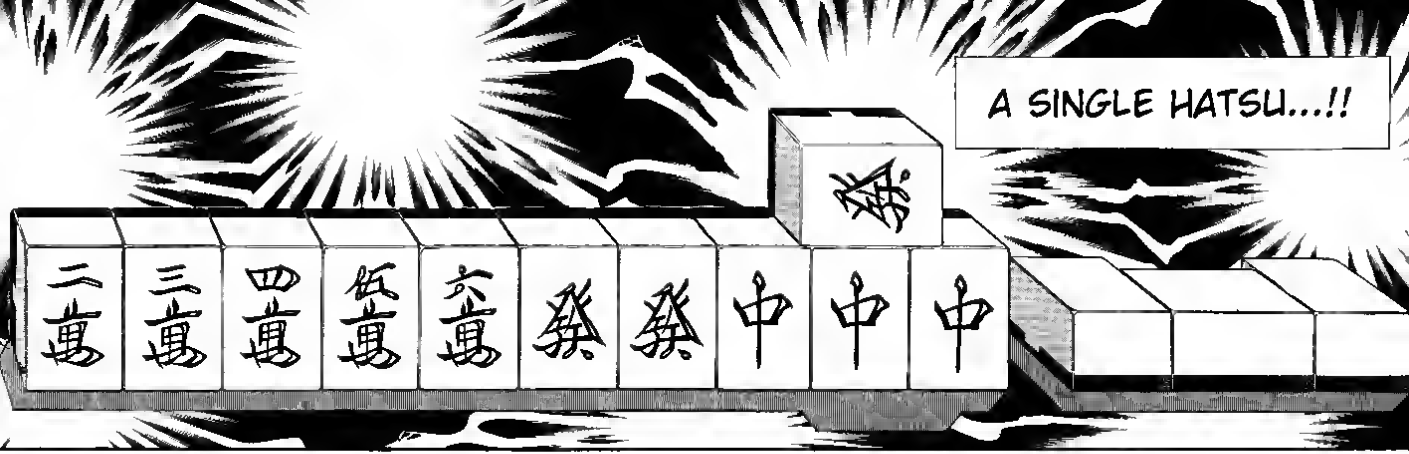

RIDICULOUS...!

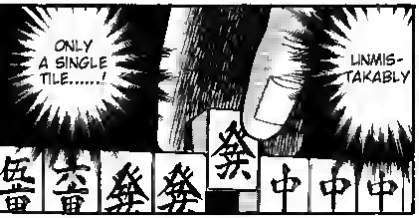
HE'S OUT OF HIS MIND ...!

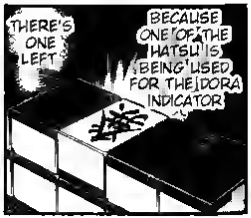
URGH ...!

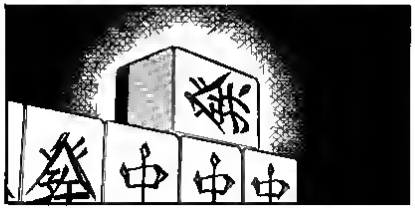
BUT... TEN!


DREW THAT ONE POINT ...!


A SINGLE HATSU...!!


ONLY A SINGLE TILE.....!
UNMISTAKABLY

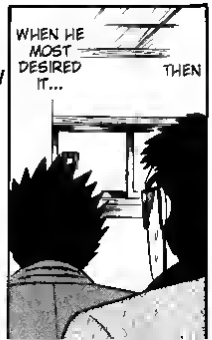

THERE'S ONE LEFT
BECAUSE ONE OF THE HATSU IS BEING USED FOR THE DORA INDICATOR



URGH...!

.....

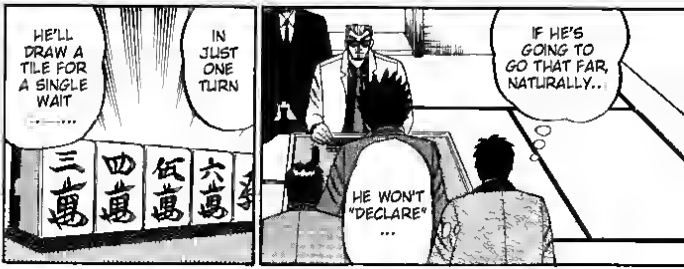
HE DREW IT...!


WHEN HE MOST DESIRED IT...
THEN

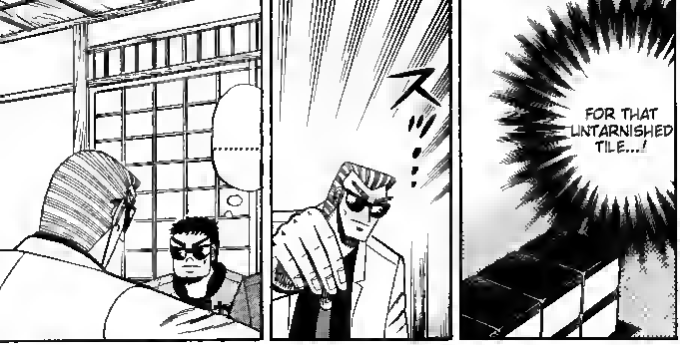
WHO'D HAVE DONE THAT FOR THIS HAND..
HE'S GONE MAD...

THAT'S CRAZY...!
NNGH...!

NATURALLY ……
TEN DIDN'T DECLARE……!
ざわ……


HE'LL DRAW A TILE FOR A SINGLE WAIT
IN JUST ONE TURN
三萬 四萬 伍萬 六萬
IF HE'S GOING TO GO THAT FAR, NATURALLY..
HE WON'T "DECLARE" …

I'D WAIT ONE MORE TURN TOO……!
YES… AFTER GETTING THIS FAR
IT'LL BE IMPOSSIBLE TO DECODE THE SINGLE WAIT.
WITHOUT DAMAGING THE FLOW HE HAS


.....
FOR THAT UNTARNISHED TILE...!

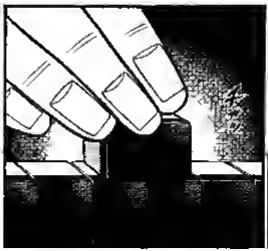
URGH ...!

DON'T DRAW ANYTHING...! HARADA...!

THAT HE BROUGHT SO FAR .....
THIS HAND...
IN OTHER WORDS...
IF HARADA CALLS RIICHI ON THIS ONE, IT ALL GOES UP IN SMOKE.

WITHOUT THE CHANCE TO BE BORN .....
WILL VANISH ...!

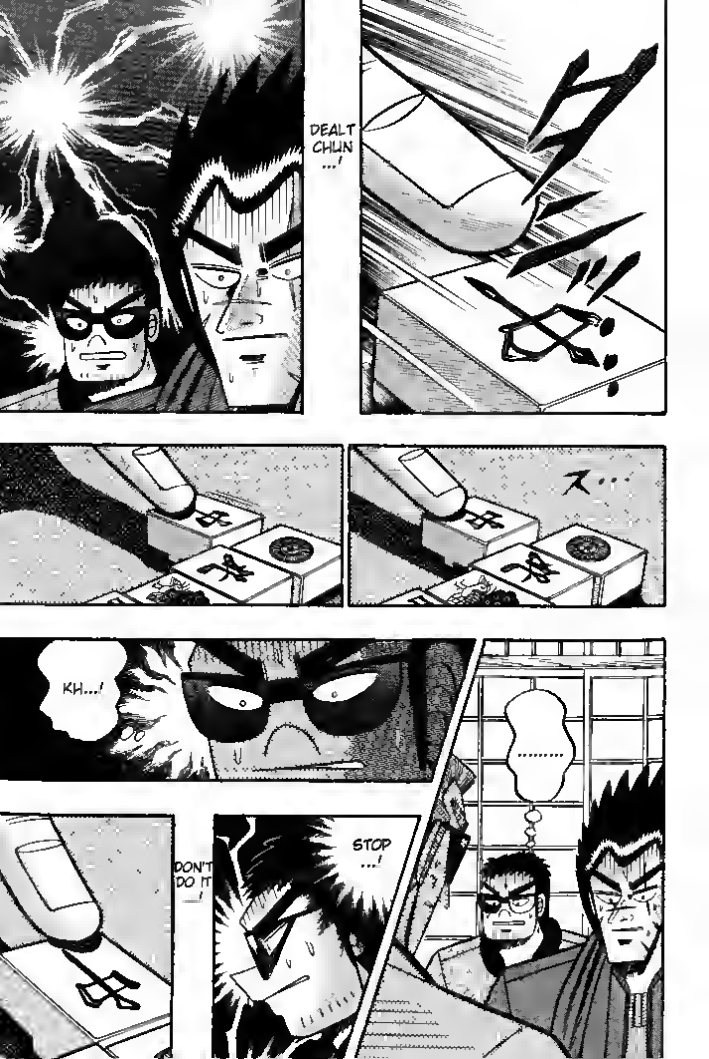
KH..!
.....



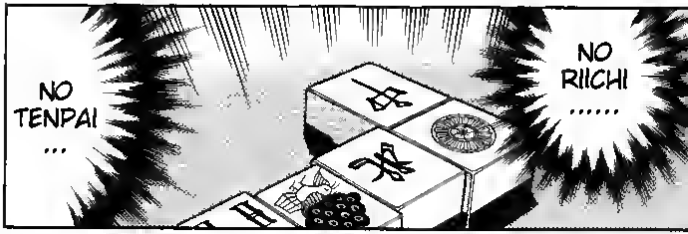
.....

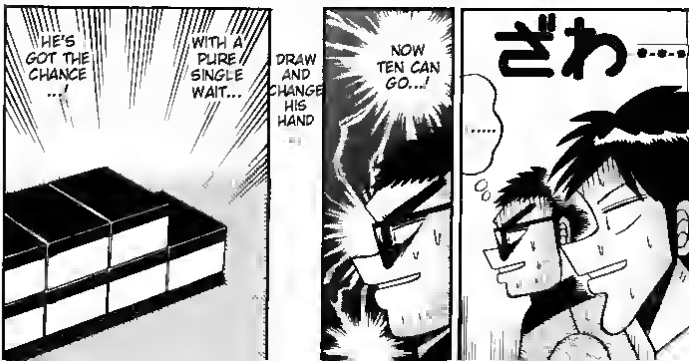
A DELAY OF ONE TURN...!
ONE MORE DRAW ...

COME ON...!

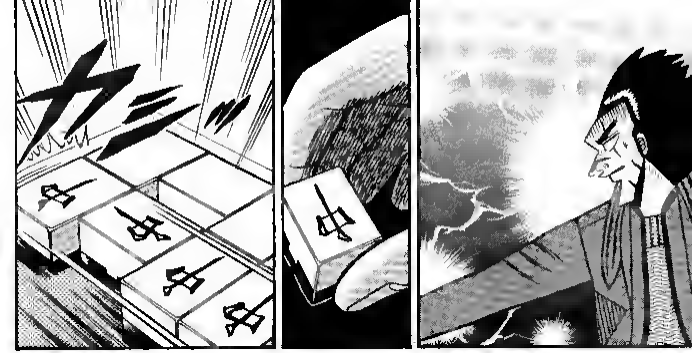

DEALT CHUN ...!
KH...!
.....
STOP ...!
DON'T DO IT ...!

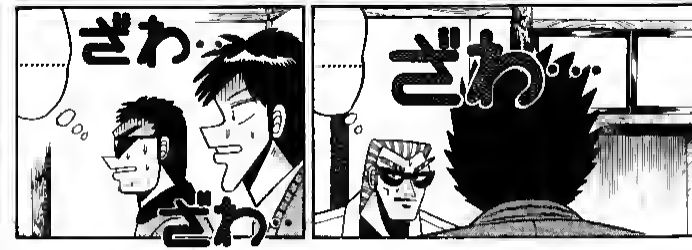
YES ...!
HE LET GO ...!

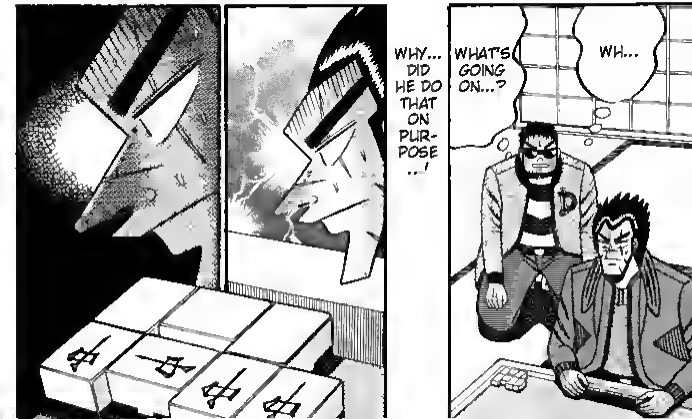

NO TENPAI ...
NO RIICHI .....


HE'S GOT THE CHANCE ...!
WITH A PURE SINGLE WAIT...
DRAW AND CHANGE HIS HAND
NOW TEN CAN GO...!
ざわ
.....

AT THAT TIME
KAN ...!
HUH ...!?
HUH ...?
HE DIDN'T EVEN THINK ON IT .....!


カミ


ざわ…
ざわ…
ざわ…


WHY... DID HE DO THAT ON PURPOSE...!
WHAT'S GOING ON...?
WH...

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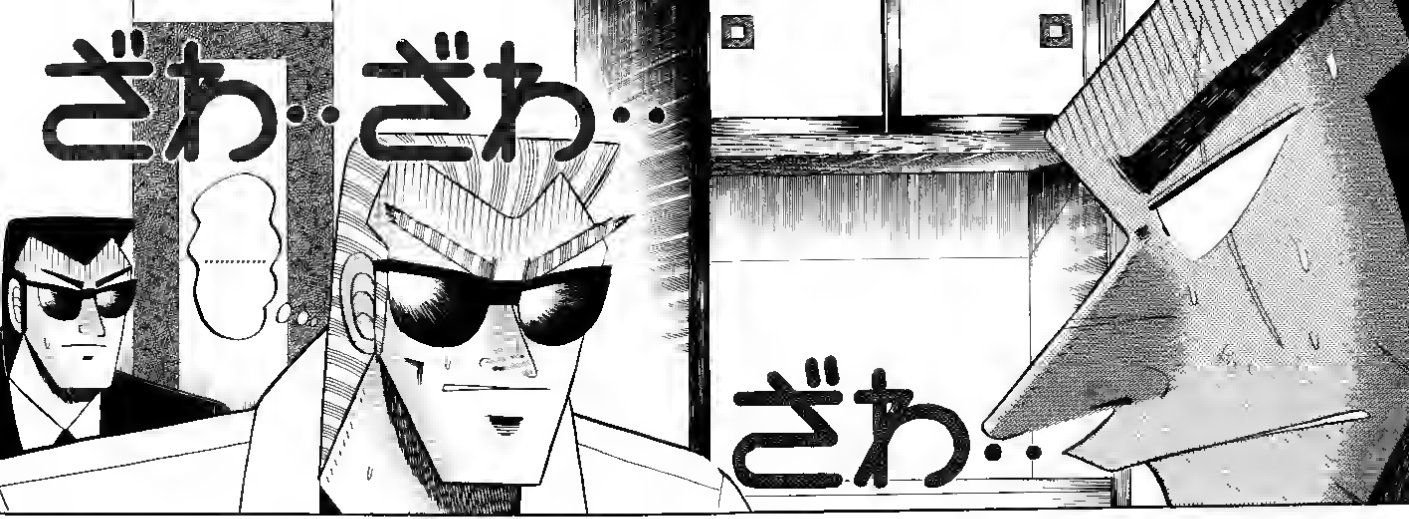
CHAPTER 110
DECLARATION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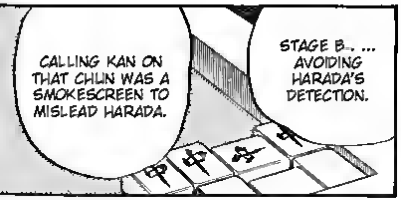
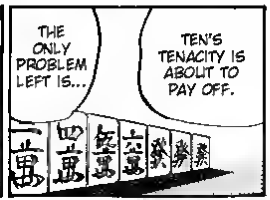
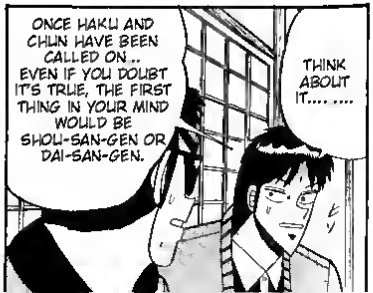
ざわ..


CALLING KAN ON THAT CHUN WAS A SMOKESCREEN TO MISLEAD HARADA.
STAGE B... ... AVOIDING HARADA'S DETECTION.


THE ONLY PROBLEM LEFT IS...
TEN'S TENACITY IS ABOUT TO PAY OFF.

ONE OF THE TWO TILES THAT HARADA WILL PICK FIRST
IN SHORT


ONCE HAKU AND CHUN HAVE BEEN CALLED ON... EVEN IF YOU DOUBT IT'S TRUE, THE FIRST THING IN YOUR MIND WOULD BE SHOU-SAN-GEN OR DAI-SAN-GEN.
THINK ABOUT IT.... ....

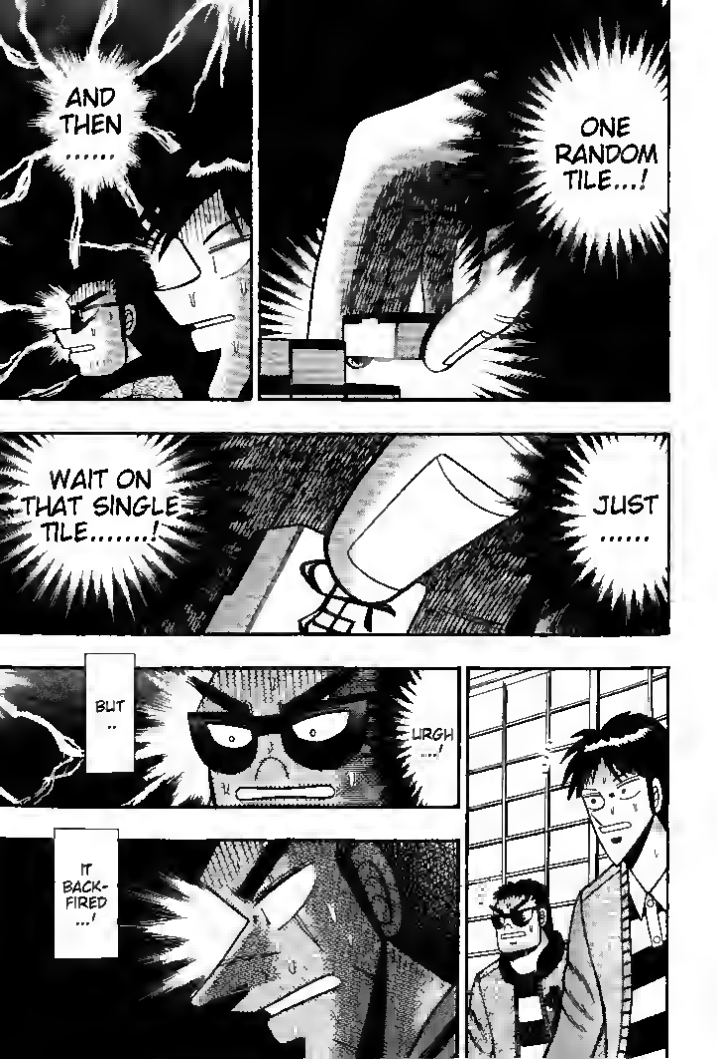
... ...
ALL IT DOES IT MAKE HARADA EVEN MORE CAUTIOUS...

EITHER WAY, HE'S IN TENPAI ONCE HE TAKES HIS RINSHAN DRAW.....
CAUTION HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH IT.

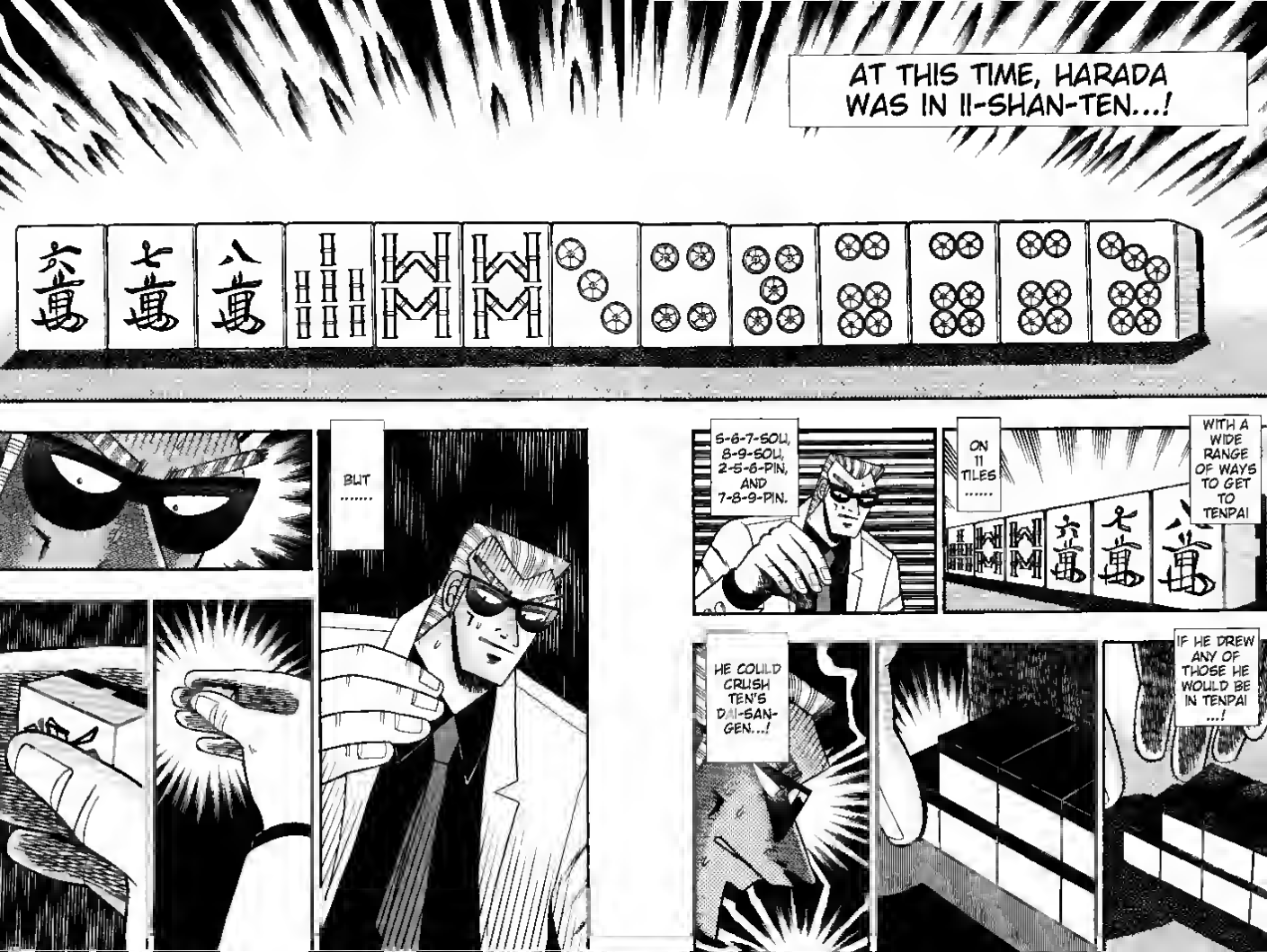
NO.....

..... WHY DID HE KAN ON THE DORA, CHUN. ....?

.....
Ooo
ONE OF HIS SELECTED TILES...
THAT'S TAKEN CARE OF .....
IS GOING TO BE HATSU...
.....
I SEE ...
スッ...
THE ONLY THING LEFT TO DO IS DRAW A TILE
HE'S ALREADY IN TENPAI
三萬
四萬
五萬
六萬
YES .....
.....


AND THEN .....
ONE RANDOM TILE...!
WAIT ON THAT SINGLE TILE.....!
JUST .....
BUT ..
URGH ...!
IT BACK-FIRED ...!

HE DREW 3-MAN...!
三萬 四萬 伍萬 六萬 發 發 發
中 中 中


AT THIS TIME, HARADA WAS IN II-SHAN-TEN...!
BUT .....
5-6-7-SOU, 8-9-SOU, 2-5-6-PIN, AND 7-8-9-PIN.
ON 11 TILES .....
WITH A WIDE RANGE OF WAYS TO GET TO TENPAI
HE COULD CRUSH TEN'S DAI-SAN-GEN...!
IF HE DREW ANY OF THOSE HE WOULD BE IN TENPAI ...!

IT DIDN'T COME TO HIM .....!

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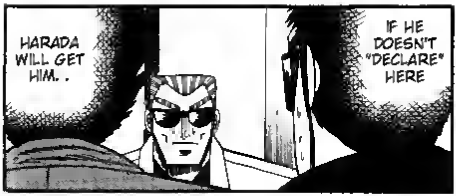
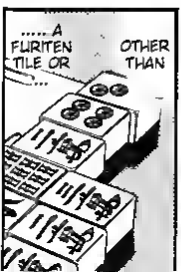
……
ざわ・・・

BACK TO TEN...
IT'S BACK!
A CHANCE, ONCE AGAIN……!
IT CAME BACK TO TEN……!
THIS IS THE LAST CHANCE
NO MATTER WHAT...
BUT

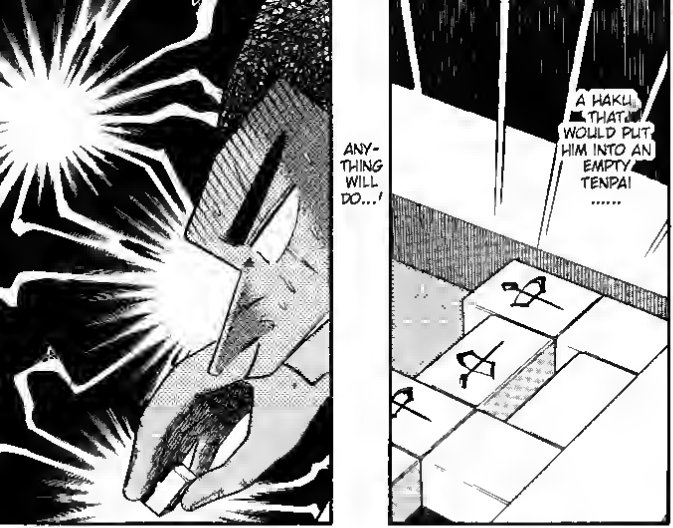
NO SECOND CHANCES ...!


HARADA WILL GET HIM. .
IF HE DOESN'T "DECLARE" HERE

THIS IS IT...!

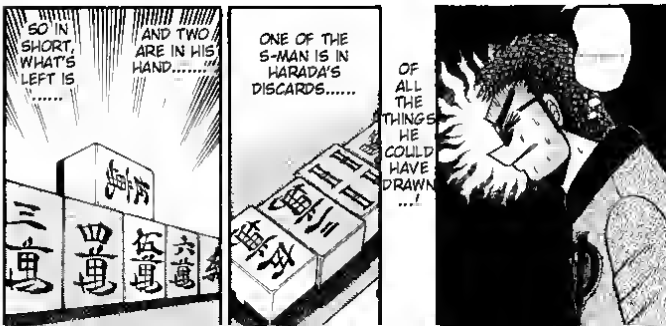

.....A FURITEN TILE OR ...
OTHER THAN

ANYTHING WILL DO ...
DRAW IT.....!


ANY-
THING
WILL
DO...!
A HAKU
THAT
WOULD PUT
HIM INTO AN
EMPTY
TENPAI
.....

URGH
.....!
三萬
四萬
伍萬
六萬
發
發

S-MAN ...!
三萬
四萬
伍萬
六萬
發


SO IN SHORT, WHAT'S LEFT IS .....
AND TWO ARE IN HIS HAND.....!!
三萬
四萬
伍萬
六萬
ONE OF THE S-MAN IS IN HARADA'S DISCARDS.....
OF ALL THE THINGS HE COULD HAVE DRAWN ...!

BUT...
IT'S NOT A SINGLE WAIT THAT HE'D WANT TO KEEP...
HE'LL WANT TO AVOID THAT IF HE CAN.
IT'S POSSIBLE TO "DECLARE" BUT
ONE TILE ...!
SO WHILE HE'D RATHER NOT...
HE'LL RICHI ....
IF HE GIVES HARADA ANOTHER CHANCE NOW...
HE CAN'T KEEP WAITING
AND DECLARE TENPAI ON THE 5-MAN SINGLE WAIT IN THE MIDDLE OF HIS HAND.
HE'LL HAVE TO PLAY THE 3-MAN
BUT .....
HUH...?
... ...
TEN..... PLAYED THE 3-MAN ...!

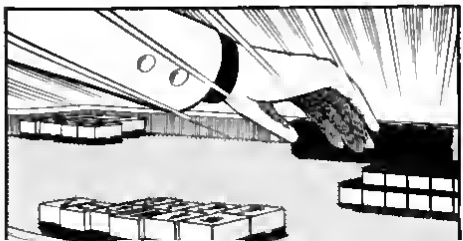
HE DIDN'T MOVE ...!
PASSED ON IT FOR THE THIRD TIME... WITHOUT DECLARING...!
GH...!
NGH ..
URGH ..... !
THAT'S CRAZY ...!

WITHOUT THE CHANCE TO PUT THAT DAI-SAN-GEN TO USE
IF HARADA DECLARES RICHI
WHY WAIT ...?
WAIT HERE ...?
THAT'S THE SITUATION HE'S IN RIGHT NOW ...!
EVERYTHING WILL GO UP IN SMOKE...!
WILL THE RIGHT TO "DECLARE" COME BACK TO HIM AGAIN ...? FROM HARADA ...!
WHEN IT'S SO CLOSE ...?
AND HE'S WAITING AGAIN

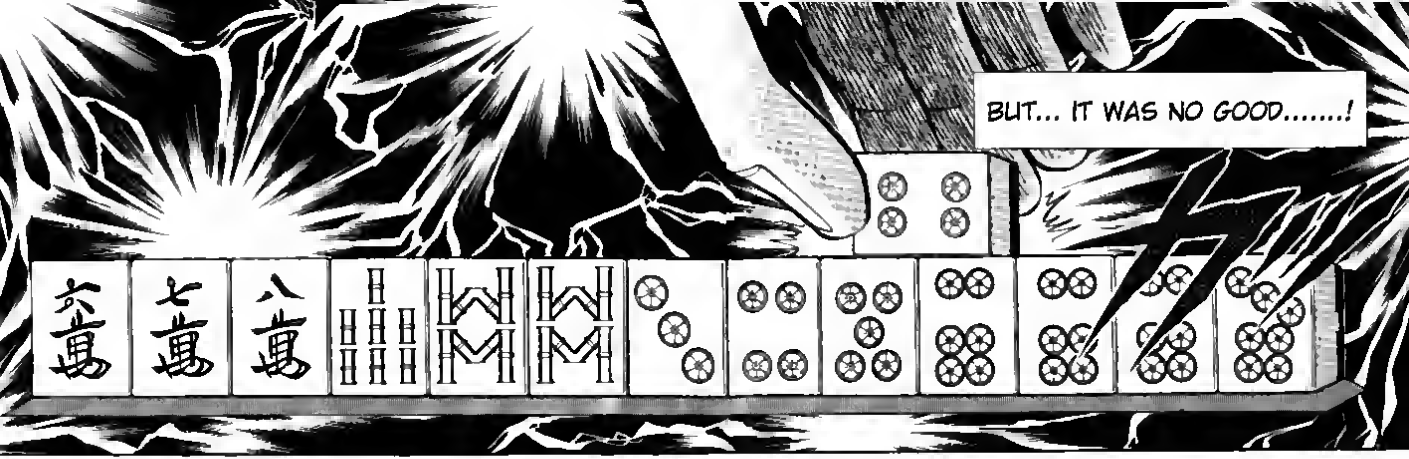
.....

I'VE GOT TO DRAW IT...!

YOU'VE GOTTA BE FUCKING KIDDING ME .....!



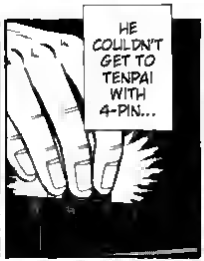
ON SOUZU.....
I CAN TAKE A WIDE RANGE OF TILES.....
DRAW EITHER AND I'M IN TENPAI ...
OR PINZU .....
DID I GET IT .....?
IT'S PINZU ...!

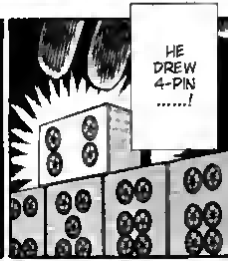

BUT... IT WAS NO GOOD.....!

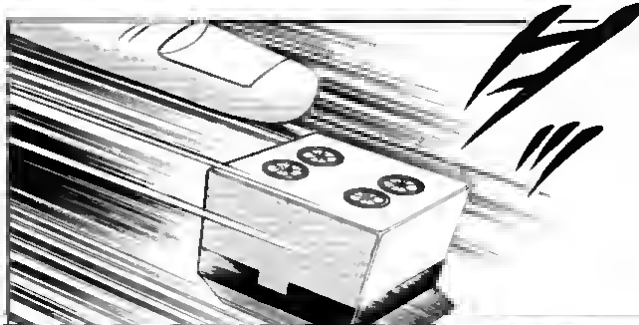
.....

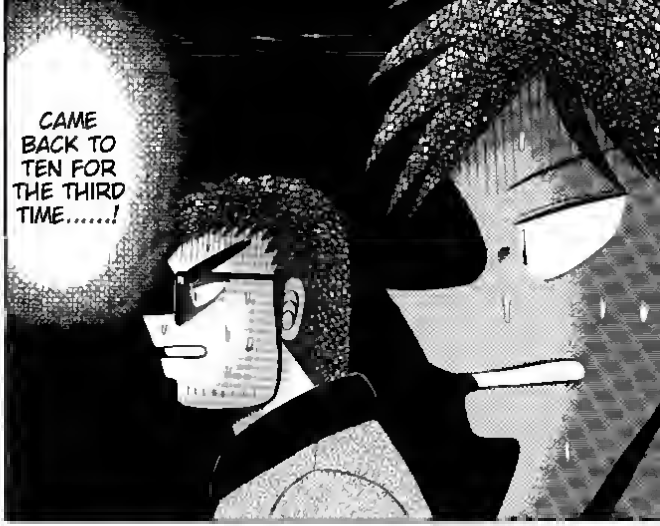
BACK TO TEN.....
さわ
NGH
.....

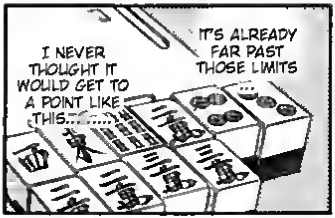
KH...!


HE COULDN'T GET TO TENPAI WITH 4-PIN...


HE DREW 4-PIN .....!



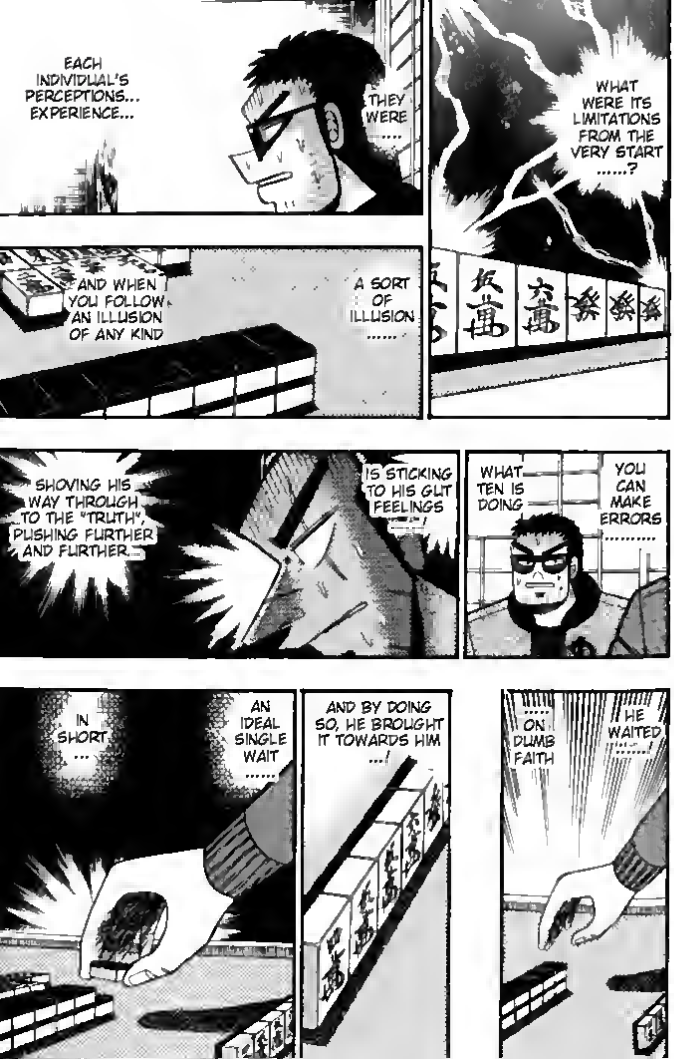

CAME BACK TO TEN FOR THE THIRD TIME.....!


I NEVER THOUGHT IT WOULD GET TO A POINT LIKE THIS.....
IT'S ALREADY FAR PAST THOSE LIMITS
...

ざわ...
ざわ...
THIS GAME IS BEYOND ANYTHING I COULD HAVE IMAGINED

BUT...
IT'S A GAME FAR PAST IT'S LIMITS, BUT

TEN COULD HAVE "DECLARED"..
LONG BEFORE GETTING HERE


EACH INDIVIDUAL'S PERCEPTIONS... EXPERIENCE...
THEY WERE ....
WHAT WERE ITS LIMITATIONS FROM THE VERY START .....?
AND WHEN YOU FOLLOW AN ILLUSION OF ANY KIND
A SORT OF ILLUSION .....
SHOVING HIS WAY THROUGH TO THE "TRUTH", PUSHING FURTHER AND FURTHER...
IS STICKING TO HIS GUT FEELINGS ...!
WHAT TEN IS DOING
YOU CAN MAKE ERRORS .....
IN SHORT ...
AN IDEAL SINGLE WAIT .....
AND BY DOING SO, HE BROUGHT IT TOWARDS HIM ...!
..... ON DUMB FAITH
HE WAITED ...!

A CHANCE TO WIN .....!

WITHOUT A PROBLEM THIS TIME ……!
HE GOT IT ……!
……
……
HARADA ……
…… SORRY FOR MAKING YOU WAIT ……

IT WAS THE DECLARATION.....!

福本伸行

FUKUMOTO NOBUYUKI

12

天

TEN

天和通りの快男児

TENHOU-DOORI NO KAIDANJI

THE NICE GUY ON THE PATH OF TENHOU

竹書房

TAKE SHOBOU